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- Autodiscover
- Microsoft Outlook 2007
- X.509 Certificates and Security

- Network Configuration
- iPhone Security for Business
- Router Settings
- Exchange Server Settings
- IIS Server Settings
- iPhone Business Applications
- Internal and External DNS Settings
- ISA Firewall Settings
- Wireless & 3G Connection
- iTunes (syncing and back up)

- Implementing iPhone into business
- iPhone Config Utility & Deployment
- iPhone via VPN & Remote Access
- iPhone Apps & SDK for Business

- Adding Exchange Mails Accounts
- Connecting to Exchange & Active Sync
- Connecting to Kerio & Active Sync
- Installing Certificates onto iPhone
- Remote wipe using OWA and Exchange

Course Dates - 2008

Thursday 30th October	Melb - Keysborough
Thursday 6th November	Melb - Keysborough
Tuesday 11th November	Melb - Keysborough
Thursday 13th November	Melb - Keysborough
Tuesday 18th November	Melb - Keysborough
Thursday 20th November	Melb - Keysborough
Tuesday 25th November	Melb - Keysborough
Thursday 27th November	Melbourne - CBD
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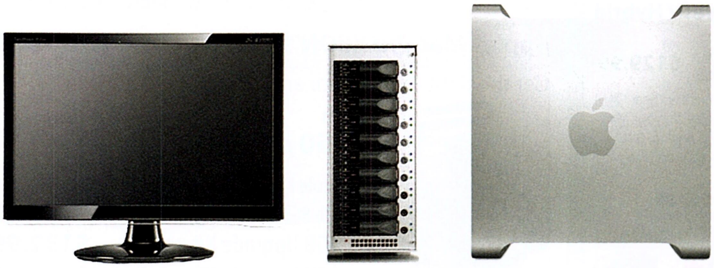

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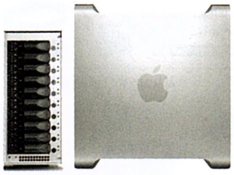

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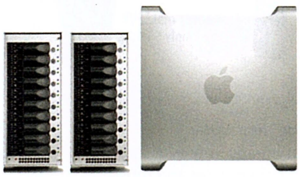

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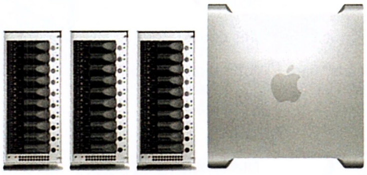

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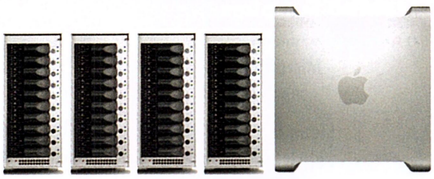

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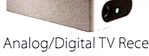

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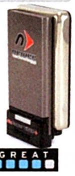

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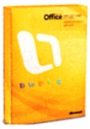

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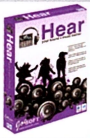

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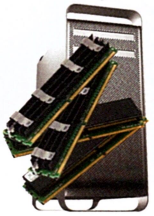

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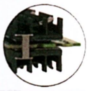

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320GB	7200RPM	16MB	$147.99	$139.99	$117.99
500GB	7200RPM	16MB	$159.99	$154.99	$129.99
750GB	7200RPM	32MB	$199.99	-	$169.99
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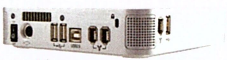

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Size	Speed	Data Buffer	FW400+USB 2.0	FW800/FW400/ USB 2.0/eSATA
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750GB	7200RPM	32MB	$179.99	$209.99
1.0TB	7200RPM	32MB	$229.99	$259.99
1.5TB	7200RPM	32MB	$309.99	$329.99

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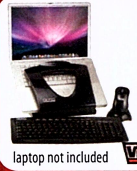

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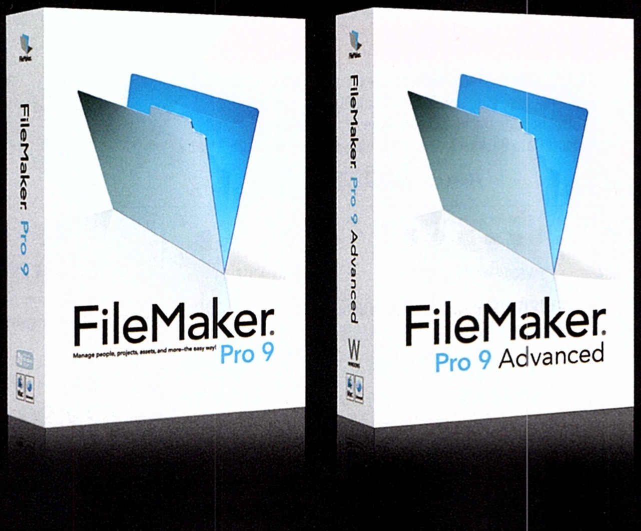

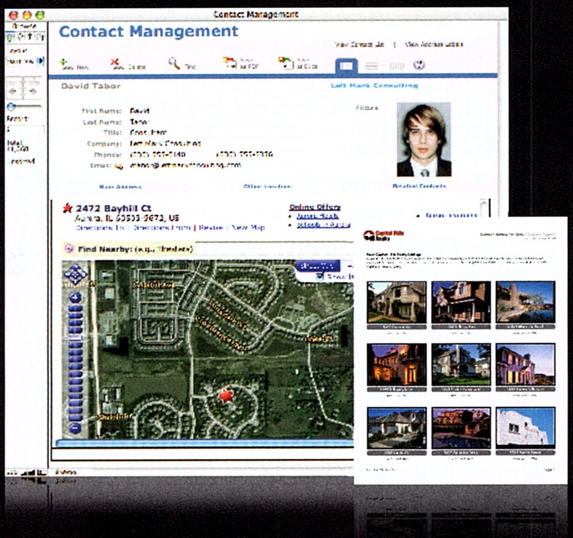

Here's What's New at a Glance:

1. **New! FileMaker Quick Start Screen** remembers your favorite databases so you can open them instantly.
2. **New! Conditional Formatting** visually formats fields and objects based on conditions you decide.
3. **New! Send Link** makes it easier to share FileMaker Pro databases via a clickable email link.
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5. **New! Connect to External SQL Data Sources** lets you integrate live data from Microsoft® SQL Server, Oracle and MySQL with your FileMaker Pro data.*
6. **New! Scripting Tools** put you in control with script folders and script copy and paste.
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012 Matthew JC. Powell
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030 Tony Williams
Fibre keeps you fit

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050 Martin Levins
Cloud computing comes of age

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064 Keith White
An introduction to the Mac, a hacking guide and some hints for podcasters

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078 Alex Kidman
Why are Mac users always smiling?

⌘-N

019 Apple updates notebooks.
Apple's flagship laptop computers got a long-awaited overhaul, with big changes on the inside and — for the first time in years — a new look as well.

023 Mac User Group events for November

026 Pro File: Ellenor Cox — producer

⌘-1

032 Snap buying
Barrie Smith
It used to be easy — digital SLRs for professionals, compacts for the rest of us. Now the lines are getting blurry. This guide will help you choose the features that are most important to you and find the camera that suits your needs and budget.

⌘-2

040 Gadget central
Matthew JC. Powell
Your first stop for the gear, gizmos and other goodies to accessorise your Mac, iPhone or iPod. This month we've got tripods and speakers and alarm clocks and so much more it's scary.

⌘-3

042 The Kid-safe Mac
Christopher Breen
Kids at play can be unintentionally destructive and heedless of the dangers around them. This is especially true when it comes to the family computer. In their early years kids can unwittingly put your data at risk or even physically damage machines. And as your children grow up and feel more at home with the computer, they become vulnerable to the internet's unsavoury elements. This guide will help you protect both your child and your Mac.

⌘-F

⌘-?

053 A database for the rest of us
056 Beyond Front Row
058 Quickly access log files
Annotate images in Preview
060 Move Safari menu bar items
Select text like an expert
Review trashed files
Navigate System Preferences
061 Fix contrast problems
Customise iPhone ringtones
Connect your Mac to a HDTV

⌘-J

067 FreeAgent Go for Mac
Speedy storage you can take with you
★★★★

068 iTunes 8
Adds some new tricks
★★★★1/2

070 XPlane for iPhone
Take to the skies
★★★1/2

071 Mio Moov 370
Gets you where you're going
★★★1/2

072 STM Rogue Roller
All you need for a trip
★★★★

073 iVolution Top SP
Classy case for iPhone
★★★★1/2

073 Palm Treo Pro
Another evolutionary step
★★★

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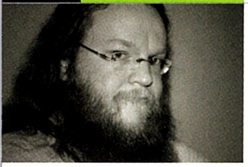

Matthew JC. Powell has a deep and abiding passion for the Mac, the magazine and its readers — in no particular order.

The need for speed

A couple of issues ago I did some testing of an iPhone on various different wireless networks.

The results, you may recall, were fairly equivocal. According to the site I was testing, all of the networks performed roughly equally — sometimes faster, sometimes a bit slower depending. I therefore recommended that you base your iPhone purchasing decisions on the deals that suited you best, not claims of network performance.

Well, imagine the outcry. Optus immediately sprang to its own defence, saying that the site I had tested was an American site and that therefore the speed I was getting was inaccurate.

Interestingly enough, Telstra said exactly the same thing. Here, in his own words, is what Michael Rocca, Telstra's Group Managing Director for Networks and Services, told me:

"Regarding the recent 3G iPhone test, you're right — it's 'a bit tricky to test iPhone performance'. New devices like iPhone take full advantage of broadband enabled wireless networks. People want the rich experience, but not all networks are alike.

"*[Australian Macworld]* looks to have used an iPhone speed test site near Phoenix, Arizona. Speed test sites vary in performance and results depending on the host's processing power, network interface speed and location. Latency due to distance and international traffic variations can cause variable results. In Australia, iPhone regularly sees well over 1 Mbps on the Next G network. Yet the test site used gave all Australian networks low-ish ratings.

"Then there's spectrum and coverage; some carriers operate partial 3G networks with vast areas where iPhone has reduced 2G speeds or no coverage at all. One network is unlike any other — the Next G network is entirely 3G HSPA enabled unlike any other. That makes the difference — you can use your iPhone anywhere across our expansive coverage area and you will get a rich 3G experience.

"While I admit a network bias, I wouldn't want your readers to forego the full potential of iPhone and similar devices. Once you've had a true 3G experience, you'll never look back."

In response to this, I asked readers on the *AMW* forums to download a speed testing application and post their results. I also followed Optus's advice and tried my testing again using an Australian speed-testing site that Optus recommended — and interestingly, the site (see "Hotlinks") gave Optus significantly better results than Telstra. By a long way.

The results of our informal survey on the forums, on the other hand, gave Telstra much better results than Optus. By a long way.

So what does all of this mean? Not a whole heck of a lot, actually.

You see, most of the time when you're using your internet device (iPhone or other) you're not going to be heading to a specific speed-testing site that's been optimised to provide you with the best speed on your network. You're also not going to be pinging some server somewhere to test latency and whatnot. Rather, you're going to be surfing to the *AMW* forums for a chat with like-minded Mac users. Or reading the *AMW* blogs for insights from our opinionated columnists. Or checking *AMW's* online reviews to help guide your buying decisions.

It's even possible you may go to some other web sites for some reason. And some of them might be hosted in other countries. Shock, horror.

Point is, you'll be using the internet under the conditions you use it under, not those the telcos would ideally like you to in order to demonstrate their networks.

Telstra has much better coverage — but no-one ever disputed that. I've also found that Telstra's fallback to the EDGE network is a better experience than dropping to GPRS when 3G coverage fails — which is only logical.

The thing is, if you don't often venture to areas where the coverage is bad — if you've got good 3G at home and at work — what does it matter if the network sucks someplace you're not?

Mostly I've found that both of them have their good moments and their bad. There have been spots where the Optus coverage felt pretty snappy and Telstra felt sluggish. Likewise there are places Telstra screams along and Optus just won't go.

If pressed to make a judgement on the basis of performance, I'd have to hand it to Telstra, but since much of the Next G content that really benefits from that speed — Foxtel mobile for example — isn't available for iPhone, what do you gain?

For now I'll stick by my original opinion: go for the plan that works for you in terms of cost — performance differences are academic.

Matthew JC. Powell

We all shine on...

Hotlinks

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Australian site for testing iPhone speed

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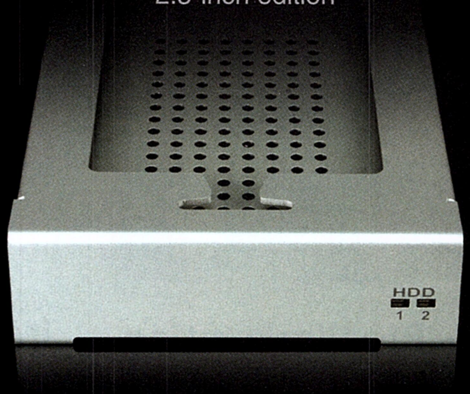

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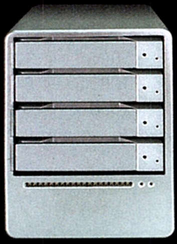

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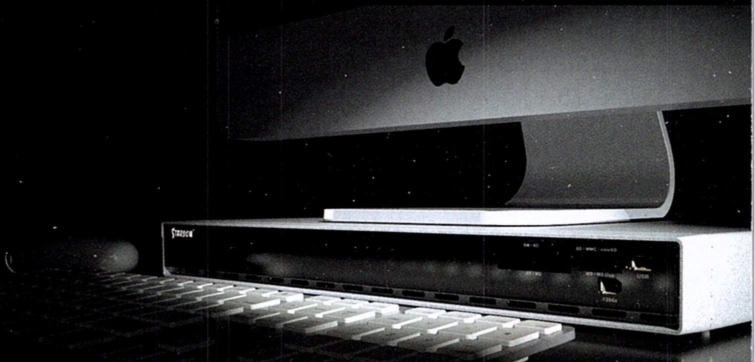

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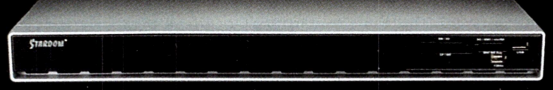

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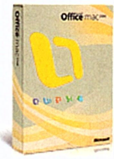

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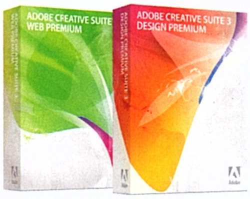

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powermedia

Each month Conexus (02 9975 0900) gives a prize to the *Australian Macworld* reader who submits what we deem to be the most interesting letter. This month the prize is a three-pack of 3G iPhone cases by XSKN valued at $100.

The Exo case is a Polycarbonate Crystal case with touch-through screen protector. Also in the pack, XRAP 3G includes an ultra-clear polycarbonate scratch-resistant case with a touch-compatible PC+PMMA screen protector and iBuds2 silicone earphone caps._ XRAP covers and protects all vulnerable surfaces and controls on your iPhone 3G without affecting its usability or functionality.

3G iPhone cases by XSKN letter of the month

Anti-virus conspiracy

I am beginning to notice a disturbing trend. And that is the increased buzz about Antivirus software for the Mac's. With the increasing market share of Macintosh computers, and the very dominant presence of the iPhone, I am hoping that the Anti-virus software companies are not licking their lips at the thought of a whole new, and growing, market for which they can write viruses?

This might all sound a bit, "conspiracy theory", but it has always seemed to me that the biggest winners from the virus problems are the AntiVirus software companies. I mean if there were no viruses on the PCs, they would be out of business (and it's a big business). So as usual, if you follow the money, you usually find the answers. What do you think?

Clark Robertson.
Qld

I think the old chestnut that the virus companies write all the viruses is a perennial, and no amount of evidence on either side will convince people to change their minds.

If you, as you say, "follow the money," you'll find that the focus of most recent attacks has been getting people to, voluntarily or otherwise, hand over information that can lead unscrupulous people to their money. Today's malware authors are all about money, not bragging rights, and the anti-virus industry is a relatively small barricade trying to stop it.

I agree that, as the Mac becomes more popular, it will become more of a target. I disagree that it's the AV vendors who'll be profiting most though. — M.JC.P.

Micro vision

I have just read Matt Embleton's letter in *AMW* 10.2008. I too have spent the first few months of my retirement doing a similar conversion job on my large collection of VHS tapes. The point you make about macrovision-encoded videotapes is valid. I have only found it to be an occasional problem, but it can be very frustrating indeed when iMovie can only capture a dark shadow of a picture. In some cases I have resorted to searching the web for a DVD of the same programme and bought it again, but occasionally it seems that I'm the only person in the world who has any copy at all, and anyway paying for a new one spoils the fun of being a conservator.

Finally a couple of months ago I found a little bit of hardware at my local JayCar called a "Video Enhancer and Stabiliser" which cleans up the output from the VCR. It goes between the VCR and whatever analogue/digital converter you are using. It cost a little over $100.

iMovie loves it and so do I! There is also a range of similar devices available online,which may be just a little cheaper depending on exchange rates and shipping costs, but which cover a larger range of tasks.

However, there is still one problem for me. I have not found a way of converting an NTSC tape to a PAL DVD. Despite a Super-VHS VCR which supposedly will output a PAL signal, and a switch on the device above which supposedly does the same thing, iMovie will not recognise this converted signal at all. I'm still reduced to creating an NTSC DVD, leaving my TV to do the conversion when I play the finished product.

What is wrong with the PAL signal from the converter that causes iMovie problems? Does it lie with my Canopus ADVC-300 interface? It doesn't make much difference whether the input to the Canopus is set to NTSC or PAL, iMovie doesn't recognise the converted signal.

Andrew Kay
Kambah ACT

The device you referred to works by stripping out "piggyback" signals that are sometimes sncoded along with analogue video to provide additional services such as closed captions or copy-protection. The desired effect is that you get a "cleaner" signal that stands up better to copying. A side-effect is that you remove the Macrovi-

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Command – V" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Mailbox, 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. Comments posted to the forums on www.macworld.com.au are also eligible for the Creature II prize.. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the 3G iPhone cases by XSKN, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

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sion signal. Remember only to use it for your own private collection and not for anything commercial, OK?

There isn't scope in the letters pages to explain to you the whole PAL/NTSC thing and why the device above does not do any such conversion. We will, however, look at exploring those issues in a future article.

— M.JC.P.

iPhone unplugged?

As you can guess, I am keen to get my hands on an iPhone. However, I am very happy with my existing mobile phone plan, so just want to purchase an unlocked handset.

I does not seem possible to get an iPhone in Australia, without signing up to a very expensive plan with one of the major telcos. Or, am I wrong?

About two days ago, I asked about purchasing an iPhone in an Apple store in Los Angeles (with a view to paying out the AT&T contract).

The staff at the store were either unwilling or unable to give me any pricing information regarding paying out the contract.

They also told me that the iPhones sold in each world "region" are fitted with a different chip; so even if a phone is purchased in the US and legally unlocked, it will not work on a carrier outside the US.

Is this true, or have I been told stories?

I checked the AT&T web site for information, but their phone number only has pre-recorded information (you can't actually speak with someone and ask a question or two), and to e-mail them you need to be an existing customer (it seems)!

Any ideas?

Rob Herweynen
Via internet

You've been told stories, Rob. The idea that an iPhone purchased in the USA would fail to function on a non-US carrier is fanciful to say the least — haven't these folks heard of international roaming? Do they think Americans all have to buy new phones when they go overseas? Ridiculous.

As for buying an unlocked phone in Australia, it does seem a lot harder than it was at first. I know my local Telstra shop will sell you an iPhone unlocked, on the condition that you also buy two accessories for it at the same time — since they're not signing you up to a plan they need to get some extra money out of you somehow.

My advice is keep looking, keep asking, and don't believe some of the tall stories about regions and chips. — M.JC.P.

Say what?

Leopard often requires updated printer drivers, which I download from the manufacturers' sites. Why can't they give them names that mean something to the user?

All of the companies are guilty, but look at this latest one: "NKsiknULo69z7gRfuvhS1r9U0XuCb9mC.dmg".

No idea? It's for a Dymo 400 LabelWriter. Wouldn't "Dymo400Mac105Aus.dmg" show that it's the Leopard version for Australia and save confusion?

John Kerr
Coffs Harbour

Not sure what you mean, John. That filename seems perfectly G7HJuikl98TH to me. — M.JC.P.

Hotlinks

www.optus.com.au/iphone
Dig around and find out how you can buy an iPhone from Optus, then unlock it.

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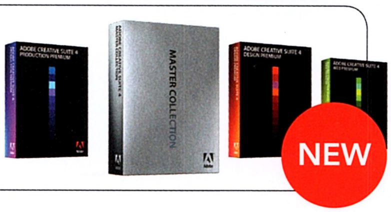

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T-Mobile says Android presales stronger than expected

NANCY GOHRING | OCT 9, 2008

T-Mobile on Monday said preorders for the first Android phone have been three times greater than it expected and that it won't promise to ship any more phones in time for the Oct. 22 launch.T-Mobile on Monday said preorders for the first Android phone have been three times greater than it expected and that it won't promise to ship any more phones in time for the Oct. 22 launch. The operator didn't disclose how many devices it has sold, so it's not clear that this is evidence of

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MacBook Pro: the next generation

At a special event on its Cupertino campus, Apple unveiled an entirely new line of laptop computers in mid-October. More than just faster processors and bigger hard drives, the new portables also feature a new version of the trackpad, significant improvements to graphics performance, and an emphasis on environmental responsibility.

Perhaps most importantly, the new MacBook Pro features a radically redesigned and re-engineered casing, finally making a break from the body it inherited from the PowerBook G4. Apple had been reluctant to change too much visually about its flagship portable in the transition to Intel processors, but the time for design caution has apparently passed.

Key to the new design is a new manufacturing process, by which the body of the MacBook Pro is carved out of a single piece of aluminium rather than constructed around a frame. The end result is stronger, thinner and seamless, lending it a striking visual appeal.

The other major visual change is the long-expected black bezel around the screen, making the MacBook Pro somewhat reminiscent of the current iMac lineup. The new display also uses arsenic-free glass and LED backlighting to be more environmentally friendly.

On the inside, the lineup includes Intel Core 2 Duo processors at 2.4GHz or 2.53 GHz, with up to 2.8GHz as a build-to-order option. You'll also find hard drives up to 320GB at 7200rpm, or a solid-state option as found on the MacBook Air. That will add $800 to the price for a 128GB drive.

Of perhaps most significance internally is the graphics system by NVidia. The MacBook Pro incorporates not one but two graphics co-processors, a GeForce 9400M and a 9600M GT. Depending on application, you choose faster performance or better battery life and the machine determines which co-processor to use.

And the other major new feature is a redesigned trackpad. Made of smooth etched glass, the trackpad features no separate button – instead, you press the entire trackpad down to act as a button. Somewhat reminiscent of the Mighty Mouse. The lack of a separate button means the trackpad is 39 percent larger than the older version. It also supports a wider range of multi-touch gestures with one, two, three or four fingers.

(During a question and answer session after the presentation, Steve Jobs said the company had investigated multi-touch screens for Macs – like big iPhones – but said it "currently doesn't make a lot of sense".)

The new MacBook Pros start at $3199 for the 2.4GHz model with 2GB of RAM and a 250GB hard drive, and $3999 for the 2.53GHz model with 4GB of RAM and a 320GB hard drive. The 17-inch MacBook Pro was not updated in this announcement.

Oh yeah, the MacBook. Apple's best-selling computer, the 13-inch MacBook, also received a refresh with the same single-piece aluminium enclosure and black-rimmed bezel as the MacBook Pro. Apple also added Nvidia GeForce 9400M graphics to the consumer notebook, answering many critics who derided the MacBooks' poor gaming performance on account of its integrated graphics.

The new models do include integrated graphics but, as with the MacBook Pro and its two co-processors, the machine chooses whether to use integrated or discrete graphics depending on the application.

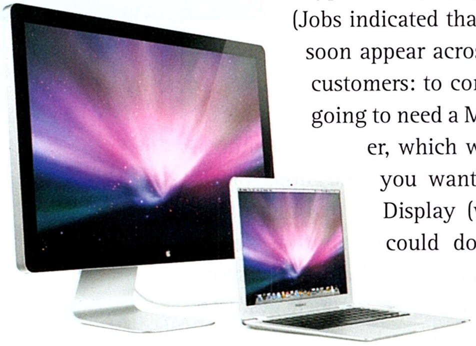
The MacBook starts at $2099 for a 2.0GHz model with 2GB of RAM and a 160GB hard drive, up to $2549 for

2.4GHz processor, the same 2GB of RAM and a 250GB hard drive. For those looking to save a bit of money, the older plastic-encased MacBook is still available, for $1649 (in white only).

The MacBook Air also got a minor update, adding just the GeForce 9400M graphics, as well as the new Mini DisplayPort.

The what? Oh, that's right. Replacing the DVI port on MacBook Pros, the mini-DVI port on MacBooks, and the micro-DVI port on MacBook Air is a new display port called Mini DisplayPort (apparently the space bar got stuck). The key reason for the change apparently is size, as the Mini DisplayPort can, according to Jobs, "do everything the DVI port can do, and at a fraction of the size". DisplayPort is a new "industry standard" and Mini DisplayPort is one variant of it.

There's probably a cost saving to Apple, only having to build one type of display port into all of its machines (Jobs indicated that the Mini DisplayPort would soon appear across Apple's lineup) but not for customers: to connect to a DVI display you're going to need a Mini DisplayPort to DVI adapter, which will cost an extra $45. And if you want to drive a 30-inch Cinema Display (which the old MacBook Pro could do out of the box) you'll be spending $149 for a Mini DisplayPort to Dual-link DVI adapter.



Speaking of displays. There is one display that you can plug straight into your Mini DisplayPort-equipped Mac with no adapter necessary. Apple also unveiled a new LED Cinema Display at the same event.

Available in November, the display features a 24-inch viewable area capable of up to 1920 by 1200 pixel resolution for true HD viewing, backlit by LEDs for consistent brightness and low energy consumption. As with the MacBooks and MacBook Pros it's in a slim aluminium enclosure and features a black bezel like the iMac. Also, a first for Apple's standalone displays, it includes an integrated iSight camera and microphone. Also built in is a 2.1-channel sound system.

Connection is via Mini DisplayPort, so owners of computers with older connectors are left out without adapters. It also features a MagSafe connector – so you can plug your laptop directly into it for charging and mains power while you're at your desk and leave the power adapter in the bag for when you're on the road. Nice touch, that.

When it goes on sale in November it will sell for $1499, $100 more than the existing 23-inch Cinema Display.

What we didn't see. High on many people's wish lists for the new laptops was support for Blu-ray Disc. Unfortunately no mention was made of the high-definition disc format until the Q&A, when Jobs said that it was "a bag of hurt" because of complex licensing issues and that Apple was waiting for the standard to take off in the marketplace before "we burden our customers with the cost" of licensing and drives. — *Matthew JC. Powell*

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The codes can be used multiple times, and you can use all three codes if you want – get a book, a calendar and some cards. The only real condition is that you have to be in Australia or New Zealand. The vouchers are valid from the 7th of November until the 30th of November, so get to it, and enjoy. — *Matthew JC. Powell*

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How Open-source is supposed to work

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Open-source software scores a victory

We're all familiar with software licenses for commercial software. But you may not know that open-source software is also governed by a license. Instead of requiring payment, however, the open-source license imposes terms: for example, the GNU Public License (GPL) mandates that anybody can change the code of GPL software, as long as they make those changes freely available.

Open-source licenses have had very little legal precedent to back them, but they got a significant bolstering recently when the US Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a decision that would have undermined the legal footing of open-source licenses. So anyone who doesn't abide by the terms of the license is infringing on copyright. — *Dan Moren*

[LEGAL]

"Twice as Fast" is false advertising

Apple's ads suggest that the new iPhone 3G is twice as fast as the original iPhone when it comes to data-transfer speeds. An Alabama woman thinks the company is pulling a fast one and has filed suit against Apple.

Apple introduces the iPhone 3G to television viewers as a device that lets you surf the web, download e-mail attachments, and access map information twice as quickly as with the first-generation iPhone. Jessica Alena Smith's attorney told ABCNews.com that Apple has "failed to deliver on this promise," and is seeking class-action status for the suit.

Apple, meanwhile, has sought to have the suit dismissed on the grounds that Smith failed to ask Apple to repair or replace her iPhone or refund her money – Alabama law requires that such action be taken before filing a lawsuit.

This isn't the first time Apple has come under legal scrutiny for aspects of the iPhone. In 2007 the company was sued for locking the iPhone to AT&T's network. And earlier that year, Apple was repeatedly sued over the iPhone's sealed design, which prevents users from changing batteries. — *Peter Cohen*

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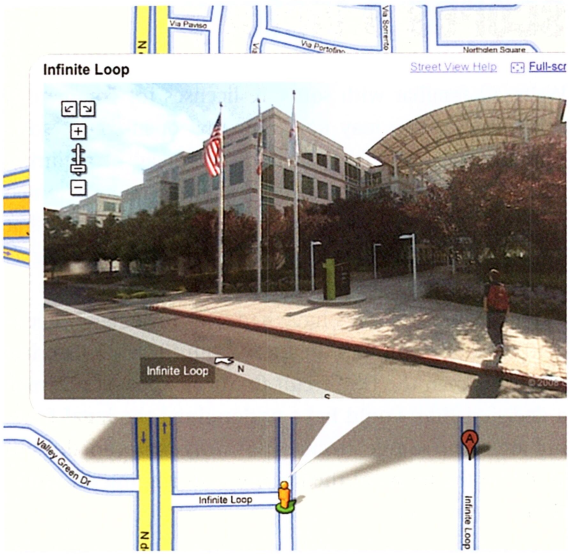
Take a tour of Apple headquarters

One Infinite Loop spotted on Google Street View

US Vice President Dick Cheney may have the kind of pull necessary to get his house removed from Google Maps (utter the words national security and you can pretty much get away with anything). But as much as Steve Jobs likes to keep every aspect of Apple secret, the realities of the modern world tend to get in the way. Case in point: Google Street View, which recently added photos from one of its camera-equipped cars sent on a photographic mission down Infinite Loop.

There's no word on where that car is now or what happened to the Google employees in it, but the photographs somehow made it back to Google, and you can view Apple's Cupertino campus on Google Maps. The upside is that you can now embark on a virtual pilgrimage to Apple HQ without having to worry about travel plans or campus security – not to mention whizzing around Infinite Loop without getting dizzy. — *Aayush Arya*



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Sat 8
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www.ozshop.net/bsmug

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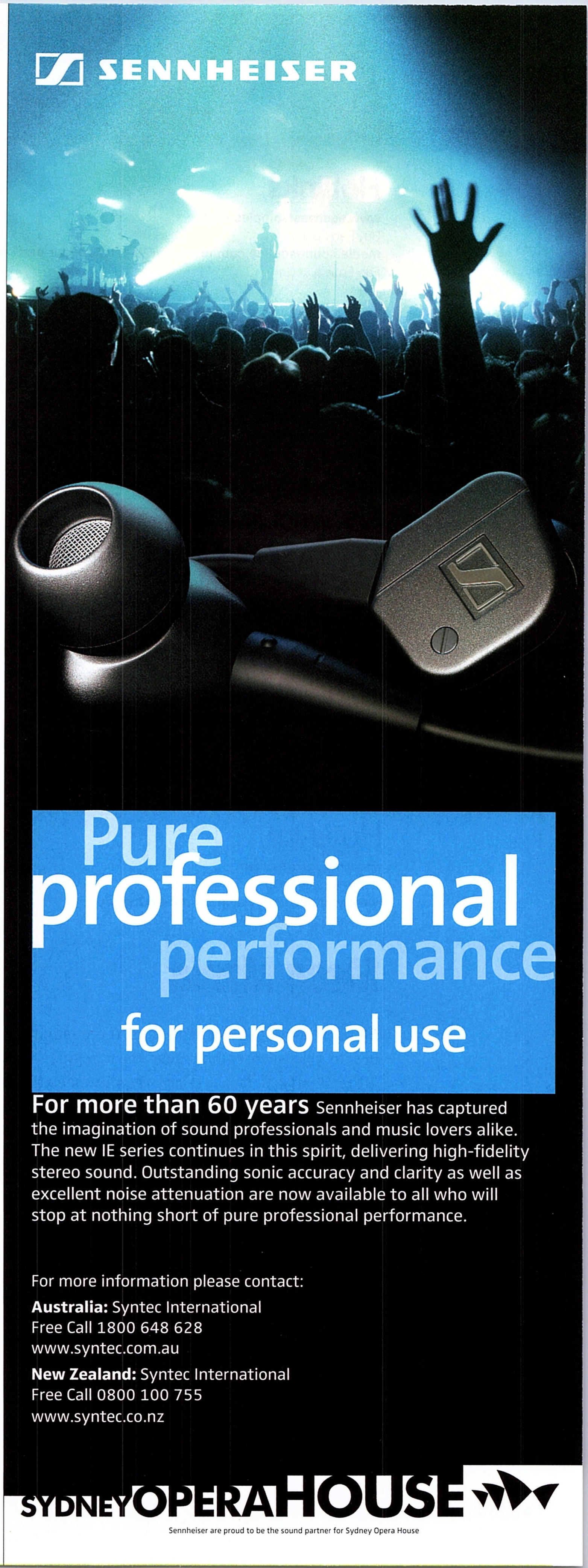

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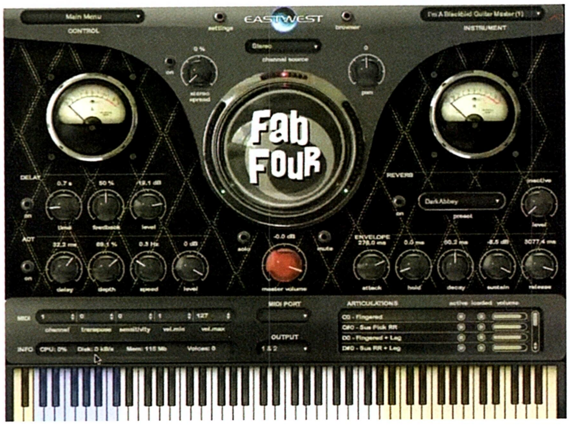

There's an ever-growing number of plugins that recreate classic instruments and amplifiers and one of the more comprehensive offerings I've come across is Fab Four. The intent of this application is to provide you with all the classic instruments that were used by The Beatles throughout their career.

Fab Four can be used as a standalone application or as either an RTAS, AU or VST plugin. Each instrument has multiple articulations, which is what delivers the sonic quality. For example, if you load one of the drum kits, the high-hat alone has 16 variations that are automatically triggered as velocity changes.

Put simply, the sounds in Fab Four are stupendous. They were all sampled from the original instruments and recording equipment and it shows. The reverb options, delay parameters and sound envelope tweaks give you some impressive customisation opportunities.

There's even a replication of the Automatic Double Tracking (ADT) process invented for the Beatles at Abbey Road in 1966 – it basically gives a fuller sound by duplicating the instrument but at speed a few milliseconds different to the original instrument.

At $415.00, Fab Four isn't cheap but if retro sounds form a key part of your sonic repertoire, it's going to be money very well spent. If you're in a Beatles cover band you'll want to buy this today. The Australian distributor for Fab Four is East-West Sounds, which can be reached on 1800 688839. — *David Holloway*

[MUSIC]

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It rhymes with vogue
www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3SsYQrgcyA
Lou Reed and others play the Moog Guitar

Moog Mania

Moog is a synthesiser icon, and the company continues to release premium gear on a regular basis. The Little Phatty II is a 37-key velocity sensitive monophonic synth with a 100 percent analogue signal path. There's all the analogue goodness of Voltage Controlled Oscillators and Filters combined with some decidedly modern conveniences like MIDI over USB and MIDI clock sync.

Like any good analogue synth, there's plenty of tweakable knobs to apply to the 99 patches and the arpeggiator gives some additional creative options. Being monophonic, it's not going to appeal to the more orchestral leaning but for the dance/electronica market it's a desirable mobile performance option.

Speaking of desirable instruments, they don't get much better than the recently launched Moog Guitar. The guitar itself is made by a boutique luthier – the Moog aspect comes with the circuitry embedded in the guitar's pickups.

This allows for some unique approaches to guitar playing. For starters there's the full sustain mode which gives you infinite sustain on every string – usually you'd need an effects pedal to achieve that. Mute mode is a fascinating one – the pickups stop the strings with the same force that sustains them, with some interesting staccato results. The controlled sustain mode sustains the notes being played whilst muting any strings not being played.

Special Moog guitar strings are needed to get the maximum responsiveness although standard metal strings will work to a lesser extent.

This is very much an instrument for the guitar obsessive with a healthy income –you're certainly assured of turning some heads amongst fellow players with this beast. The Little Phatty Stage II retails for $1395, the Moog guitar for $8995 and both are distributed by Audio Chocolate (03 9813 5877). — *David Holloway*

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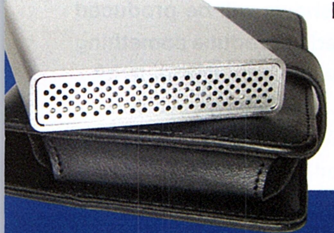

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The story starts here

Ellenor Cox — producer

The line between TV and the internet is drawing ever closer with a new drama, *Scorched*, about to hit Aussie TV soon. The series, set in Sydney in 2012 at a time when there has been no rainfall for over 200 days is using online and user-generated content to excite audiences around Australia before the drama goes live.

We chatted to Ellenor Cox from Firelight Productions who, with her husband Marcus Gillezeau, is the producer of *Scorched*. Firelight specialises in "fully convergent, all-media productions".

Why use a web site to build interest in the *Scorched* story?

www.scorched.tv was designed to wrap around the telemovie broadcast experience in terms of providing both a prequel and sequel to the movie. The prequel rollout is more extensive than the sequel as one of the primary aims of the site was to draw attention to the telemovie and encourage people to view the TV broadcast as an appointment viewing television event.

What are some of the limitations that the web poses, and what improvements do you want to see as a producer that will improve the web's effectiveness in the future?

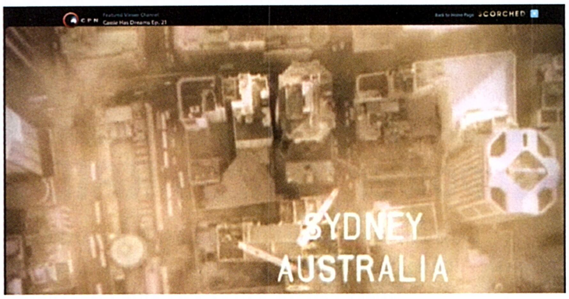
The limited broadband width in Australia is something that all producers must deal with. Also the need for the audience to have up to date browsers and Flash in order to experience sophisticated web sites. The need to work with Search Engine Optimisers early in production is necessary in order for people to easily find your site.

You mention Search Engine Optimisation — is that where most of your traffic comes from, are you doing any other advertising online?

We had hoped to get more traffic from Search Engines, however the majority of our traffic was actually direct. Meaning people simply types in the URL. A lot of traffic also came from marketing by nineMSN across their portal. Luckily we also had on-air promotion on Channel Nine. Surprisingly we also got a lot of traffic from press coverage online, especially through smh.com.au

What software was used to build the web site and produce the TV series?

Both video components of the TV telemovie and internet drama were shot on HD. Final Cut Pro was used to edit the online drama. The web site uses flash and HTML.



How has the internet changed making a TV series? Is there enough being done in Australia to link the two, and if not, where is it being done better?

The States and the UK are leading the way with online augmentation of TV series but that is primarily due to funding structures being in place to finance the new media offering as separate to TV. This funding model is still in its infancy in Australia and relies almost solely on government funding. Certainly the advancements in video streaming and embedding and the proliferation of sites such as YouTube have had an influence on how the internet has changed TV production as there is now an expectation to provide some kind of online presence for a TV project.

Can you see a time when shows will be produced only for the web? If you wanted to produce something for the internet now, where would you distribute it?

This model already exists particularly overseas – MetaCafe, Revva and Blip TV are good examples of where this content can be found. The financing model is advertising driven.

Do you look for different talent when producing online content?

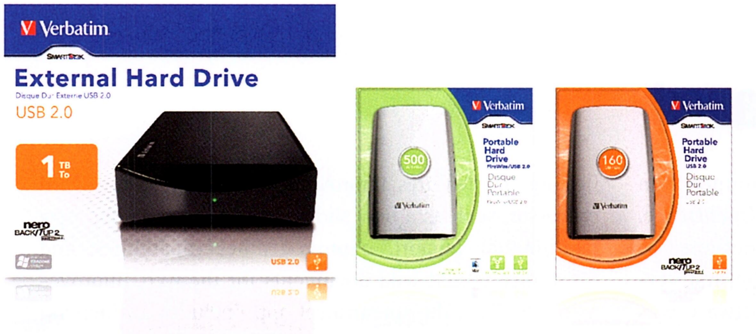
In terms of acting talent I looked for the best person for the role. Naturally people with experience who have been in well-known shows tend to be better talent. In terms of production talent, we did look for people who had had some experience in online content delivery, however the majority of the crew were experienced TV production crew.

As a producer, what's your opinion of sites like YouTube or iTunes?

Great! They educate an audience into becoming proficient at watching video content online and encourage social networking communities which can have a huge impact on your project – particularly from a viral campaign point of view.

Have you considered the effect that mobile devices, like the iPhone, may have on your ability to market your story?

The more devices the merrier! Everything for the web/iPhone needs to be served up as short pieces with good production values and preferably a good dose of humour. — *Danny Gorog*



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[MUSIC]

Hotlinks

music.myspace.com
MySpace Music

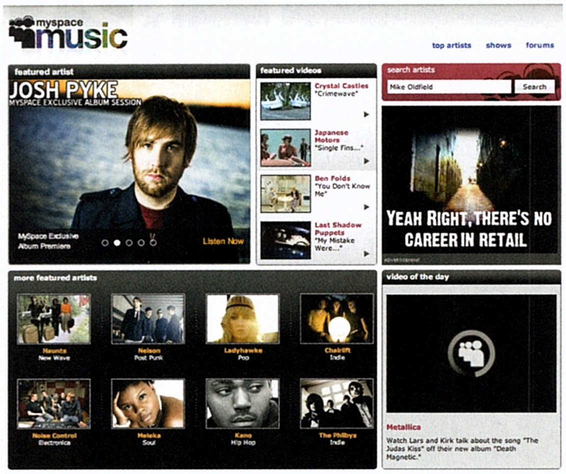
MySpace — iTunes killer?

In the first half of this year, if you'd said that the iTunes business model for selling music would be under serious threat, the reply would have been "from who?" Dozens of pretenders from Microsoft to Last.fm have made attempts at seeking a dominant position and all have a long way to go.

MySpace Music launched on the 24th of September and by the end of the month more than a billion songs had been streamed. It took iTunes Music Store a lot longer to reach its first billion and it was in operation (in the US at least) for five years or so when the five billion mark was reached.

This is a totally unfair comparison of course, as music streamed on MySpace is free via a standard web browser whilst on iTunes you only get to listen to 30 seconds for free and you need iTunes to do it. Which is the whole point: MySpace is the first online music portal to truly challenge the iTunes model.

Free streaming of all music is a significant change and one that is being backed by the major labels, most likely at the expense of their long-term viability. The only money changing hands (aside from the avertising revenue MySpace drags in) occurs if you decide you want to download the song – you can then click through in most cases to Amazon to complete a purchase.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The Philbys Indie
video of the day
Metallica
Watch Lars and Kirk talk about the song "The Judas Kiss" off their new album "Death Magnetic."

Don't feel too sorry for the record moguls though. At time of writing EMI had just announced it is launching its own online music service – in direct competition with MySpace Music to which EMI signed on as a partner. Expect others to follow suit pretty quickly.

More to do. Aside from the free streaming model as the attention grabber, MySpace still has a lot of work to do to ensure significant market share. The infamous MySpace interface remains, albeit with a recent facelift. It truly is ugly, navigation is problematic and be prepared for wall-to-wall ads at every juncture.

The purchase options aren't uniform either – some links take you to Amazon UK, others to the US store, with all the fun of working out conversion rates. iTunes Store wins hands-down for usability, but that's not the key driver here. — *David Holloway*

[SOFTWARE]

Hotlinks

www.openoffice.org
Another productivity suite for Macc

OpenOffice 3.0 released

The OpenOffice.org Community announced on the 13th of October the release of OpenOffice.org 3.0, a free office software suite designed as an alternative to Microsoft Office. This is the first version to run natively on Mac OS X. The software was previously released as a public beta.

OpenOffice.org features different modules: Word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, graphics, formula and database capabilities are included. The system is extensible, as well – you can supplement OpenOffice.org with new extensions that let you tailor its capabilities for what you want. Besides native support on Mac OS X, OpenOffice.org 3.0 features improvements to Writer, the word processor, such as a new slider control for zooming, new multilingual support, improved notes capabilities, and the ability to edit wiki documents for the web. Improvements to Calc, the spreadsheet app, includes an increase in capacity up to 1024 columns per sheet, a new equation solver, and new collaboration feature for multiple users. Draw, the graphics app, now supports poster-sized graphics up to three square metres. And Impress, the presentation module, features a table designer.

OpenOffice.org 3.0 is provided for free under the GNU Lesser General Public License (LGPL). — *Peter Cohen*

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, THEIR WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

One minute Gary and Brenda were cruising along, building a loving home for their family. Then the next thing they knew, their world turned upside down and they were facing Christmas with no job, and no home.

Two of their three children, who've had a severe medical condition since birth, suddenly became critically ill and were hospitalised. Gary lost his job because he couldn't be in two places at once… and then they were evicted. How could this happen to an ordinary, hard-working Australian family? Brenda and Gary still don't know how it got so bad, so fast. Thank God they turned to the Salvos!

To help people like Brenda and Gary, we need your support for our 2008 Christmas Appeal. More than any other time of year, this is when people experience all kinds of crises and desperately need our help.

Please give to those who really need your support today. Your generosity will help make a big difference to the lives of many Australians in real trouble.

PLEASE HELP FAMILIES IN CRISIS GET THEIR LIVES BACK TOGETHER

Donate online at **salvos.org.au/camac**
or call **13 SALVOS (13 72 58)**

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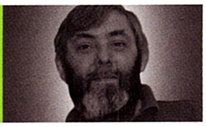


Tony Williams
is waiting for the laws to change so he can marry his MacBook Pro.

Getting connected with your Mac

Will Terria be the next Telstra?

So the Federal Government is going to throw a large amount of cash at building a National Broadband Network (NBN), technically known as Fibre To The Node (FTTN) and at the moment it seems that Terria and Telstra, the two likely bidders, are spending a lot of time throwing dirt at each other. I thought it might be time to consider what this all means to us poor communications users.

At the moment, depending on where you are, you are restricted to dial up (about 64kbps), ADSL (a maximum of 1.5Mbps) or ADSL2+ (from about 8Mbps). The new network will operate above 12Mbps and will cover over 98 percent of the population. This has been established by the government as part of the bid process.

Now the two players. We all know, and love, Telstra. It is the company that currently has a monopoly on the wire between the exchange and your house. It also has a considerable percentage of the market in all other communications; telephone, long distance, mobile, internet services and backbones. Terria started out life as the "Group of Nine", or G9, and now consists of Optus, AAPT, iiNet, Internode, Macquarie Telecom, Primus, Soul and TransAct; yes that is only eight but PowerTel, once a member, has been bought by AAPT. You can consider Terria as "everyone else" — between them they control more of the communications market than Telstra. At one stage Macquarie Bank was also considering a bid but earlier this year gave up and became an adviser to the Telstra bid.

For all intents and purposes we currently use fibre between the exchanges, and this is where the signal gets shifted to lower-bandwidth copper. The new network will change this so that the shift happens much closer to your home, in the network cabinet or "node". Due to the shorter distance and less sharing of the fibre link it is possible to give users a higher speed.

The big problem for Telstra in this architecture is that it can make Telstra's exchanges next to useless. The new network may well bypass the exchanges altogether — going straight from the fibre backbone to each node. This can used to provide both phone and internet service.

It was Telstra that first floated the idea of a national broadband network offering fibre to the node back in 2005. At the time it proposed changes to legislation to lock competitors out of the network, arguing a monopoly was the only way to make money. That idea got short shrift from the Howard government and the ACCC.

The G9 consortium was founded in 2006 and in June last year put a proposal for pricing and access to the ACCC that included the founding of a separate company to run the network and wholesale access without a retail arm. The ACCC rejected the proposal in December while accepting that most of the proposal was a good idea, particularly the separate wholesale company. This is referred to as "vertical separation" and most people, Telstra aside, think it is a good idea.

During the election, the Labor party said it would contribute $4.7 billion to build a National Broadband Network as part of a public/private partnership.

As we get closer to the closing of tenders and only two fighters in the ring, the war of words is heating up. Each side is accusing the other of an anti-competitive proposal. Both sides also have web sites dedicated to pushing the propaganda and throwing some mud.

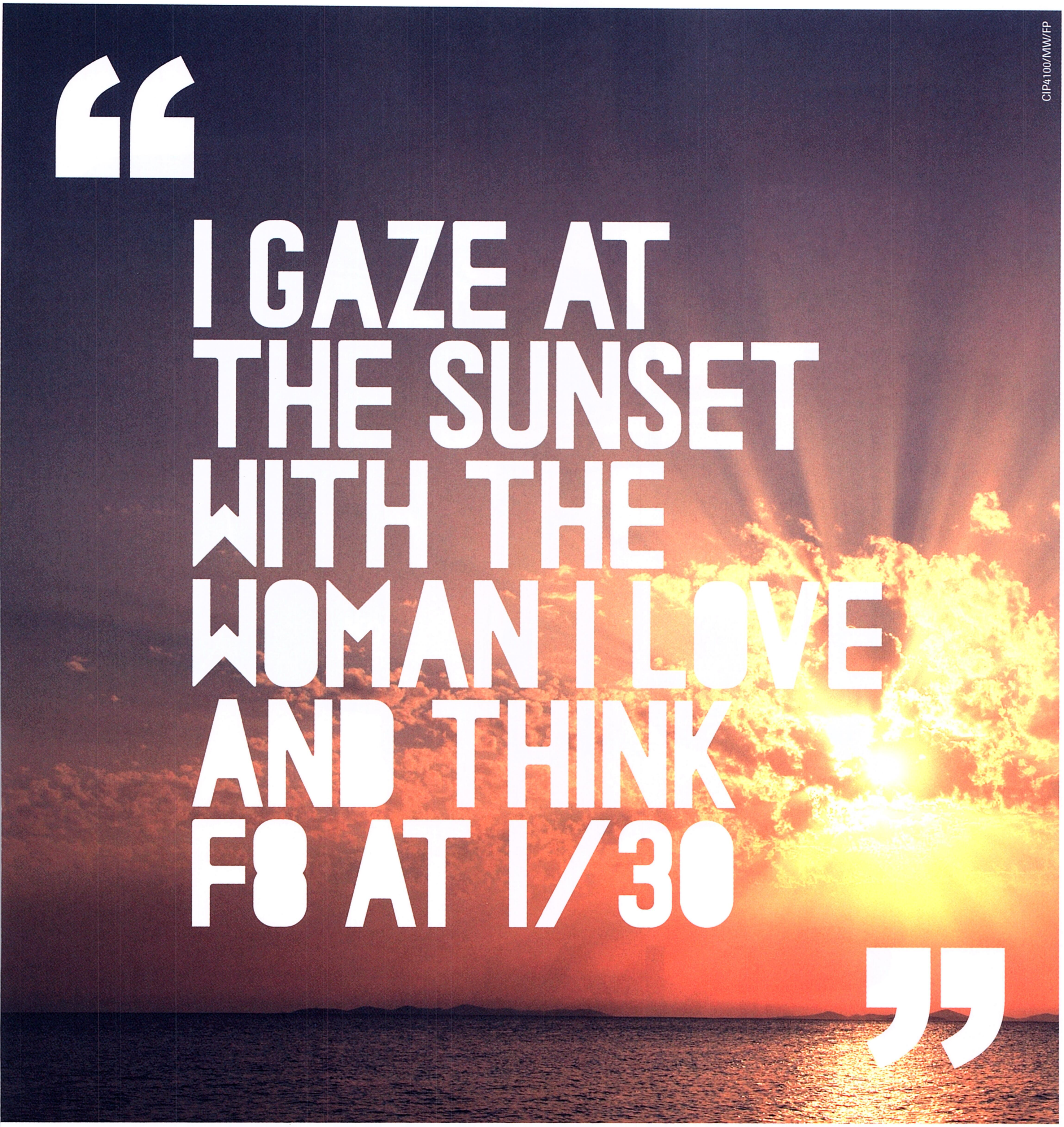
The truth is that both bidders will probably require at least short term protection from a second network running to the node, though exactly how this protection will be put in place remains a problem. Of course anyone putting in a second network — a so-called "overbuild" — will start with the higher-profit major cities and may never get to small towns, while the NBN is forced to go to smaller, less profitable, centres to cover 98 percent of the population.

The other problem bidders will run into in the future is the ACCC. In the past the ACCC has had some serious arguments with Telstra about access and pricing for both the local copper loop and wholesale internet access, it is not hard to imagine any bidder having similar problems after winning the NBN bid process.

The one thing we can be sure of is that either proposal will give us faster broadband, probably at similar or cheaper prices than now, and we can all applaud that. Don't hold your breath though, there is likely to be a lot more arguing and mud-slinging before a proposal is finalised and the NBN gives up to five years to roll out the network.

Hotlinks

www.fairgobroadband.com.au
Terria states its case
www.nowwearetalking.com.au
Telstra's side of the argument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IT'S PLAYTIME

The new EOS 50D will put your photography in a whole new light. The ISO range can be expanded to a huge 12800*, allowing incredible image detail in the lowest of light. With its 15.1 megapixel CMOS sensor shooting up to 6.3 frames per second, you'll be amazed at what you're able to capture. Go on. Get out there and play. Visit **canon.com.au/eos**

*Normal ISO range 100-3200. Expandable via custom functions to high setting of 12800.

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Barrie Smith

SNAP BUYING

From pocket compacts to digital SLRs, this guide will help you make the right decisions on what camera suits your style.

Once upon a time it was all about pixels when it came to camera buying decisions. Today it's near impossible to buy a camera with a resolution level as low as two million pixels – you have to fight your way through a forest of snappers packed with 8, 10, 11 and more megapixels.

Wise buyers should begin by looking at features to improve your capture of images. In the current climate it's more a matter of lens zoom power, LCD screen size, additional video ability etc.

There are two basic categories of digital still camera: compact and digital SLR.

Compact cameras, also referred to as "digicams", feature a fixed lens, generally compact form factor, pocketable, lightweight and simple to use. (But not always!)

For many, the digital Single Lens Reflex or dSLR is a "real camera", just like those in the heyday of film cameras – interchangeable lenses, enormous control of picture taking plus access to a host of accessories.

Price-wise, the two types cross over: there are ultra-sophisticated compact digicams that head towards $1000; there are dSLRs that can be picked up from retailers – complete with a "lens kit" – for much less than $1000.

Dreams. When digital photography began to hit its straps a few years ago, it seemed dSLRs would never fall to the $1000 level, making them a far-off dream for most keen photographers. At the same time the compact digicams were really beginning to come into their own.

When dSLRs began to arrive in numbers many dreams were also shattered for long-time owners of expensive and extensive film SLR systems, replete with lenses, flash units, extension tubes, filters, etc.

The early – and most of the current – dSLRs will not operate fully with earlier film SLR lenses. For one thing, the CCD image sensor is often smaller than the film's 36x24mm frame. So a lens's focal length increases by a factor of 1.5x or 2x.

Additionally, the autofocus and exposure systems won't work with the earlier film SLR lenses. You have to focus and set the lens aperture manually.

Today, it's generally recognised that the resolution level and light gathering method of film lenses is far from ideal for image capture on digital cameras. The pixels of a CCD are far smaller than earlier silver particles in a film emulsion.

The really interesting story is how compact digicams filled the gap when the dSLR appeared to be a late starter: cameras began to appear – and they're still coming – with all sorts of blandishments: auto focus that tracks moving subjects; multiple options in exposure determination; multiple flash options; burst shooting modes, and more.

It will be hard to dislodge these easy-to-stow cameras from the scene as they offer many people the hardware to pursue images without the baggage of the dSLR approach.

However, hardened and experienced photographers will always go for the dSLR for its level of control.

At this point in the discussion you'll have to make a decision: would the type of photography you want to do benefit from a digicam or a dSLR?

Do you want to play? You can always have fun when shooting photos but some people don't want the act of taking the picture to intrude on their fun.

If your only use of a camera is to shoot the occasional birthday, picnic, kid's sport, day at the beach or similar you're in luck. For little more than $100 you can pick up a camera from a major name that will have a 3x optical zoom, millions of pixels on the CCD and enough features and modes to pull in excellent pictures.

One of the things you miss at this price level is chic and slimness.

Canon has a great little digicam in the PowerShot A470 and it even comes in three colours. It possibly has a few too many bumps on the exterior but the 3.4x zoom does help, even though the maximum lens aperture is a slow f3.0. It has 7.1 megapixel capture. It's attractive. Takes AA batteries. Online price around $120.

Other makers have similarly appealing, cheap and easy-to-use digicams. Check out the Olympus FE-340 and Panasonic Lumix DMC-LS80. The former has a 5x zoom, the latter is fitted with a 3x; each has 8-megapixel capture. Both can be bought in three colours. Online priced at $180 and $160 respectively.

Few of these cameras at this price level have an optical viewfinder, so you may find viewing your shot via the rear LCD screen a tough ask in bright sunshine.

Do you want to get fancy? Spend a little more and you can walk away with a camera that will not only please the budding photographer in you, but provide a picture-taking device that can catalogue a stamp collection, capture garden specimens or shoot images for school or uni assignments.

Head over the $200 mark and you enjoy some useful features. Sony's W series is a good example. For one thing you get an optical viewfinder plus a rear LCD screen.

Sony's DSC-W150 (in three colours) offers a 5x optical zoom, 8.1-megapixel image capture and a macro photography range that lets you shoot 10cm from the subject. Exposure compensation can be accessed, there's a burst mode and not only a face detection mode but a smile shutter as well! Online prices touch $250.

Move a little higher and other models that may appeal include the Samsung i7, Pentax Optio S10, Kodak EasyShare M863 and Fujifilm FinePix Z20fd.

In this bracket you start to find attractive features such as larger screens – some even rotating – seven to ten megapixels on the CCD, along with a larger internal memory, so you may not even need a memory card.

Getting serious. The business gets serious once you get to the $400 level and more. Now you nearly nudge dSLR territory – at lower cost.

When I say "territory" I mean that literally. I mean the ability to cover more of it in magnified detail from a distant camera position than ever before possible with a fixed lens digicam. I speak of cameras with unbelievably long zooms.

These cameras offer long zooms at an all-in price that is unachievable in the field of dSLRs. The longest zoom range in an interchangeable lens I've come across is Tamron's f3.5-6.3/18-270mm zoom lens, aided by an anti-shake mechanism.

The choice of high-end compact cameras is growing by the week. Many are SLR look-alikes – with prominent handgrips, top viewfinder and a rear LCD screen. Some cameras can capture RAW format images, putting you into the same paddock as the pros as far as polishing refined quality images. One caution: don't think you can entirely rely on the stabilising mechanism and seriously handhold a camera with the lens set to a zoom of 500mm or more. You can handhold but you have to endure the spectacle of the stabiliser fighting your minuscule hand movements; far better to switch off the stabiliser and fix the camera to a tripod, a friendly shoulder, fence or wall. Fujifilm S2000HD has a sensor-stabilised 10-megapixel capture, 15x optical zoom lens, turret finder and LCD screen. I've found it online around $360+.

Nikon's Coolpix P80 features a CCD-shift stabilised 18x zoom that images to a 10.1-megapixel CCD and can shoot continuously at up to 13 fps. Online prices tend to be about $400-500.

Olympus sells its SP-565UZ with a CCD-shift stabilised zoom that reaches out to 20x. This camera captures 10-megapixel images with a burst rate of 13.5 fps and can be found online for $520+.

And finally the Panasonic Lumix FZ28 features an 18x optically stabilised zoom, capturing to a 10.1 megapixel CCD. The camera's burst mode can shoot at 12.5 fps and 1280x720 pixel HD video. You'll get no change from $600 for this one.

What can I do with all these pixels?

To many people the whole subject of pixels and what size print you can extract from a digital image is a mystery. Needn't be so.

Let's take a typical image of 4000x3000 pixels: divide each figure by 300 (as the final resolution used by your printer in dots per inch) and you get a print that measures 13.3x10.0 inches — or 34x25 cm.

Or let's go the other way. Say you want a decent 8x10 blowup of a snapshot. At 300dpi, that means you want 2400 by 3000 pixels, so at the very least a 7.2-megapixel image.

If you're going to use your pictures on the web, use the figure of 72 (representing the typical resolution of a monitor) as the divisor. So for an 8x10 image to appear on screen you only need 576x720 pixels — a 1.3 megapixel camera will deliver that for you. Of course the exact size it will appear on screen will vary depending on the resolution of the monitor.

The main thing you get from extra megapixels is the ability to enlarge and crop your image without losing image quality. You don't magically get a better image from more megapixels and nor do you necessarily get a bad image from fewer.

SLR in the digital age. The dSLR is a class act. If you want to enjoy ultimate control over your picture taking, precisely set exposure, focus, brightness range and colour space, the digital SLR is the one.

The penalty is that dSLRs are considerably larger and heavier than digicams and to enjoy the wonderful world they promise you have to take advantage of the camera maker's extensive lens range and shelf of accessories.

Be warned about the subtle trap the dSLR makers have set you: there are plenty of deals around where you can buy a gorgeous dSLR with a pair of kit lenses that will set you back less than a grand. The trap is that the kit lenses will probably be a pair of zooms offering a 3x zoom power each, and maximum apertures of f3.5 or f4 – so the optical finder's view will be darkish and your picture-taking in low light severely limited.

A more useful single 3x lens (only) with a maximum aperture of f2.8 is going to cost you closer to the $1000 level. Ay, there's the rub.

At time of writing, Canon had seven dSLRs on the go. Flagship model is the EOS-1Ds Mark III, for which the online price surpasses $7000 (body only). The full frame CMOS captures 21.1 effective megapixels and has a burst rate of 56 shots at 5 fps for capturing action shots.

The EOS 5D has much going for it at a lower price ($2500 body only): full-frame CMOS sensor; 12.8 megapixel capture; shoot up to 60 frames at 3 fps in one burst. It also features a 6.4 cm Live View LCD screen which allows you to use the screen instead of the optical viewfinder (a feature borrowed from the digicam world).

Two more approachable models (price-wise) are the EOS 1000D and EOS 450D. Online, expect to shell out $800 to $1000 for a body and 18-55 mm kit lens. Nikon offers eight cameras. Online priced from $700 (D60 and kit lens) right up to nearly $5000 (for a D3 body only). The D3 is a standout of course, so the pros are lining up to wrap their mitts around one. The specs are impressive: 12.1 megapixels; full frame CMOS sensor; 9-11 fps shooting rate; AF system employs 51 point sensors; 7.6 cm Live View LCD screen; double CF card slots; HDMI output; useable ISO range from 200 to 6400.

The most intriguing Nikon model is the D90, with its 12.3 megapixel half-frame CMOS sensor (1.5x lens focal length) and 7.6 cm Live View LCD screen. It can shoot 16:9 video in 1280x720 pixel quality at 24 fps (so make sure you've got a big memory card in there). Online price is around $1700 including 18-105 mm VR lens.

Sony surprised everyone by launching its A900 dSLR in early September. Quite a camera specs-wise, it can capture a full-frame CMOS image of 24.6 megapixel resolution. It also features an integrated stabilizer, nine-point autofocus, HDMI output and a 7.6 Live View LCD screen.

Micro Four Thirds — the other type of camera

While Olympus has achieved a remarkable prominence in the market with its line of compact digicams and dSLRs it is still, when compared to giants such as Sony and Canon, a little tiddler.

In comparable form, Panasonic has not smashed any sales records in spite of launching a few very interesting dSLR models, beginning with the overpriced Lumix DMC-L1.

Both these companies, along with Fuji, Kodak, Sanyo and Sigma, supported the introduction of the Four Thirds system, using a common sensor and lens mount to assure compatibility between Four Thirds System bodies and lenses produced by different manufacturers. At this point only Olympus and Panasonic have produced cameras with Four Thirds sensors and lenses.

So, it's a surprise to see a modification to the format — Micro Four Thirds. The aim is to reduce both body and lens sizes dramatically. Reading between the lines, the launch of the new format would appear to be motivated by a need to boost sales of dSLRs and answer buyer criticism of current models' sizes.

Compact digital cameras continue to offer an expanding range of features and performance; market surveys indicate that customers prefer compact models as they find digital SLR cameras to be big, heavy, and difficult to operate.

The Micro Four Thirds System (compared to Four Thirds) will have an approximately 50 percent shorter mount-to-sensor distance, a 6mm smaller lens mount outer diameter and two more electrical contacts in the lens mount to deliver new features and increased system functionality. The sensor remains the same size.

In the new scheme it appears the pentaprism optical viewfinder is removed to reduce the lens-to-CCD distance. So, added to the rear LCD screen providing a Live View of your shooting, the top turret viewfinder will also be an LCD one. No optical view!

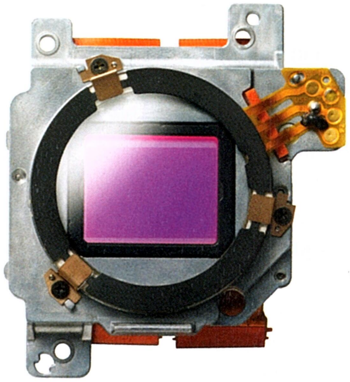
In short, what started as a way to standardise lenses and accessories across a range of makers has evolved into a third type of camera in its own right, with the size of a compact and the interchangeable lenses of a dSLR. The lack of an optical viewfinder, of course, means that in practice the cameras will be far more akin to compacts than to dSLRs.

Does the world need a third type of digital camera, or is this all just marketing and further confusion to an already crowded market? Only time will tell.

For low-light shooting it can stretch its ISO sensitivity to 6400 at a pinch. Pricing was unavailable at press time, but don't be surprised to find it around $4500.

Carrying three models, Olympus continues to surprise the market with a reasonable pricing structure and innovative design. All cameras use the "Four Thirds" lens mount imaging to a 17.3x13.0 mm Live MOS sensor.

Of particular appeal is the E-420 dSLR. It features a 10 megapixel sensor and a 3.5 fps continuous rate to capture eight RAW frames. Like a lot of dSLRs these days it has a 6.9 cm Live View LCD. Online price is around $700 for body and 14-42 mm kit lens.



The E-520 has similar specs to the E-420 but includes a sensor shift arrangement to deliver image stability. Online price is about $900 (with 14-42 mm kit lens).

At the pro level, the E-3 model offers Olympus quality and some features that will help the guys and girls who shoot pictures for money. Like 10 megapixels, an internal sensor shift stabiliser, ISO range from 100 to 3200 and 5 fps continuous shooting. Expect to pay an online price of $2100 (for the body only, no lenses).

Last but not least, photo industry stalwart Pentax has three models: K100D Super (6.1 megapixels), K200D (10.2 megapixels) and the K20D (14.6 megapixels). Online prices (body only) range from $560 (first two models) to $1000 (K20D).

The last word. As with so many things, the decision about which camera suits your needs has much to do with what demands you're going to place on it, how much flexibility you need, and how much you're prepared to pay. If you really just want a point and shoot happy-snapper, then your options are plentiful and cheap. If you're going to want to do a lot of printing (and especially if you're going to do a lot of enlargements) then get yourself more megapixels and, if possible, better lenses (which doesn't necessarily mean you have to go dSLR, as many compact cameras have high-quality lenses as well and if you're looking to be artistic and create effects with different focal lengths, flexible lighting and more, you might want to look into the flexibility a dSLR can afford you. These days, you don't necessarily have to pay the Earth for it.

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Web. www.buymac.com.au

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Cairns QLD 4870
Ph. 07 4041 6000
Web. www.talktothemac.com.au

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platinum partner

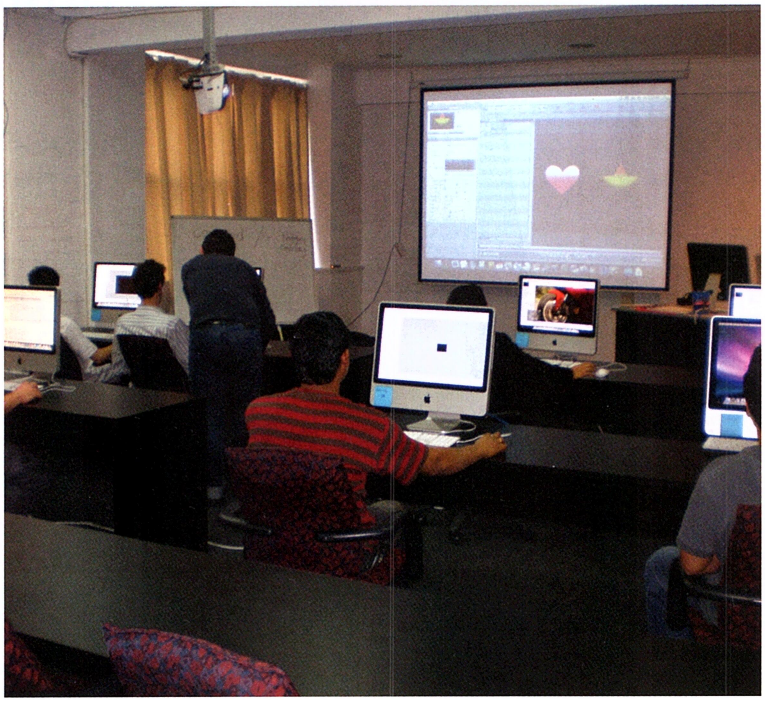
Authorised Reseller

⌘-I

Fleur Doidge
believes everyone has a story to tell.

Insights into the Australian Mac community

Power and the passion



An unlikely alliance between two excited Apple Store staff over 15 years ago sparked the creation of a new reseller with a fresh approach.

Stanley Whitehouse, a 40-year-old seasoned in the UK ad industry, was working at a Mac store in Sydney in the early '90s and Arthur Pennas worked there as well on the weekend, to pay his Uni fees. "What excited us was how users could draw on the screen of the first Mac — with its 9-inch black-and-white screen, keyboard and mouse, with software like MacPaint and MacWrite by Apple," Pennas says.

In 1993, Pennas — by then with a double major in computer science and engineering and considerable eagerness to change the computer industry in Australia — and Whitehouse teamed up to form Powermedia Systems, initially a small IT consultancy.

"Then once we saw Photoshop version 1 and the likes of QuickTime 1, both of us felt a spark. We saw what we could do with this little computer," Pennas says. "We managed to take a trip together to Macworld San Francisco, to see what all the fuss was about at this geek show."

There, the guys saw many third-party products that worked on the Mac but weren't available in Australia. "We thought, 'what a great idea to open up a shop that would carry all these great third party products in Australia," Pennas says.

Powermedia Systems stocked product such as Aldus PageMaker and Quark XPress, which were being seen in Australia for the first time and increasing the appeal of the Apple Mac to all and sundry. In the early days, there didn't seem many uses for the Mac due to the paucity of software available. Pennas and Whitehouse decided to specialise in applications for the graphic design industry.

"And once XPress, Photoshop, Freehand, and Director became available in Australia, we saw a massive increase in computer purchase by first time buyers. They all wanted to jump on that bandwagon and do graphics design, photo retouching and things like that," Pennas says.

Desktop publishing in the early 1990s was only just emerging, so a company was needed that could put all the individual pieces together. Powermedia worked hard to develop strong relationships with vendors such as Apple, Aldus, Adobe, Agfa, Quark and Dainippon Screen early on — at a time when few resellers were focusing on getting access to such specific software, hardware and tech notes.

"This allowed our guys to put solutions together and provide them to our clients," Pennas says. "Everyone was amazed by how simple it was to draw a line or circle in MacPaint on the Mac. They were used to computers with zeros and ones all over the screen or some kind of machine language."

Powermedia got to work by exhibiting at tradeshows, demonstrating the Mac and what it could do with the software already on the market, which few people were familiar with at the time. "It was great in the early years as everyone was new to the Mac platform, and they were looking for experts that could help them set up a Mac at home or work, and create digital artwork from ideas in their minds," Pennas says.

In the past, products did what they stated, whereas today everything is hidden, he notes. Software is so much more powerful today, but much more opaque to the user.

"Times have changed immensely," Pennas said. "Nowadays with the internet, people can search for hours on products anywhere, and make their judgment on what they read,

Hotlinks

www.powermedia.com.au
Powermedia Systems home page
www.photoshop-user.com/history/
Photoshop user page on the history of Adobe Photoshop

sometimes for better or worse. Our clients most of the time know about 80 percent of what they need to know about what they want."

Today, Powermedia Systems gives a lot of advice about digital workflow, and knows how to make recommendations that suit different visual professionals — whether graphic designers, video editors or layout artists. And Pennas estimates that the number of software and hardware solutions on the market for the Mac today has grown by a factor of 500.

"So our guys here too spend endless time on the internet, researching product for our industry," Pennas says.

Apple too has changed, with Macs now revised about every four to six months — as opposed to every one or two years in the early 1990s. iPods and the like get updates every three months or so. "I had a Sony CD player and it probably lasted me five years," Pennas says. "In five years' time, my current iPod will probably be revised 20 times, be 100 times faster and have 20 times more storage!"

Initially, Powermedia Systems sold Dainippon Screen drum scanners for $100,000 to $250,000, but today's flatbed scanners for $4000 do 90 per cent of what the drum scanners did. People in those years were prepared to spend that much money, because it was a niche market and only the ones that had money and knowledge on how it all worked got into it, according to Pennas.

Whitehouse retired from Powermedia Systems in 2003 — but Pennas is still helming the company.

"Apple is a very dynamic and different computer company. Their products since day one have looked different to other computers on the market; they always seem to be leaders in industrial design, which keeps the consumer amused with their products and creates a cult following," he says. "Most of us can't wait for the next Apple product revolution. Its nice to be able to sell a product that sells itself."

Through Windows. Pennas gets special pleasure from selling Macs to Windows-centric types — especially those that still ask him whether Macs use a graphical interface. Once they use their new Mac at home with the iApps, they're always ringing up, praising the Mac's ease of use and functionality as a digital lifestyle organiser.

He is also a fan of the tight integration of Final Cut Studio with Apple hardware. "We started selling Final Cut Pro v1 about eight years ago, and the big players in digital video were laughing at us selling toys to the video industry," he says. "Eight years later, Apple's Final Cut Studio suite running on Mac Pro eight-core Xeon processors just rocks!"

Even though Apple, he adds, offers no roadmap today that helps its partners prepare for the future or research complementary product, it is still a company like no other that inspires daily. At the moment Powermedia Systems, based in Sydney, has 16 full time staff members, and a few casual sales and training consultants, divided into retail and professional teams. The latter works on key design, print, Web and video customers, mainly researching products and putting together solutions.

Recently, the company has added Apple certified trainers. And it's working — according to Pennas the company is growing 40-60 percent year on year.

"We could have easily opened up numerous stores Australia-wide, but we might have lost our identity and expertise as a specialist solutions reseller. It takes the right staff, knowledge, products and so on to make a successful company," Pennas says. "Customers these days are after a very high level of service."

The first 15 years have been a great learning curve, but the next 15 will be an even better journey, he promises. "Dedication and passion for the solution, that's our motto," Pennas says.

A few Christmas Ideas from Macs-4-u

Bose SoundDock Portable $549

NEW!

Cygnett Groove II Traveller $99.95

Quality is always Treasured.

Cygnett Groove Headphones from $99.95

Elegance for your iPod, iPhone or BlackBerry with

case-mate®

from only $29.95

Macs-4-u.com/store

New & Used Apples, iPods and Accessories

269 Gt Eastern Hwy, Midland

08 9274 7111

macs-4-u@westnet.com.au

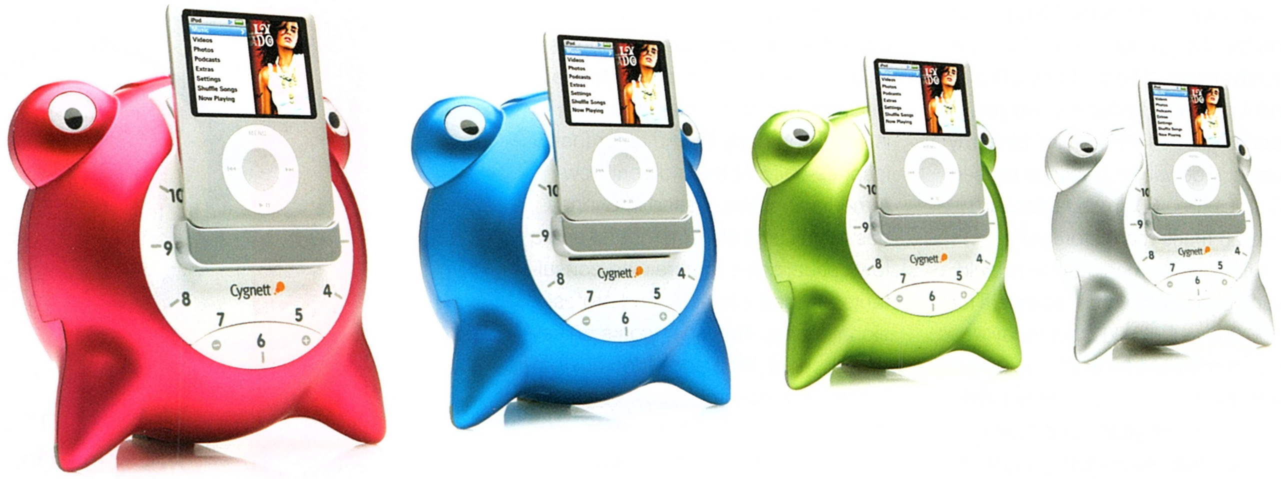
Shipping Australia Wide

MADE TO FIT

Next time you're near a mirror, have a look at your ear. Then have a look at your other ear. Notice anything? They're different. Not quite symmetrical. Imagine how different other people's ears are.

That's the conundrum Klipsch hopes to solve with its Image X10 earphone range. Klipsch has patented Contour Ear Gels, which effectively shape themselves to the inside of your ear. The result is better noise isolation (so you don't have to have your music as loud) and better bass response (so pump it up). The X10s also include five sets of ear gels, in three different sizes and two different styles — so you're sure to be able to fit your ears.

Image X10, Klipsch
$549
Powermove, 03 9464 4999
www.powermove.com.au



CLOCK IN

Let's face it — it's really hard to like an alarm clock. Whatever its nifty features and stylish design, it's the thing that wakes you up from your peaceful slumber and drags you into the drudgery of the day.

Thus, anything that starts your day with a little less drudgery is to be encouraged. The GrooveToons, by Melbourne-based accessory designer Cygnett, offers a cheerful, cartoon-style clock face to start your day. The best part is it holds your iPod nano so you start the day with your own songs and a fully-charged iPod.

It's enough to make you look forward to waking up in the morning. Well, almost enough.

GrooveTunes, Cygnett
$70
info@cygnett.com
www.cygnett.com

WHAT'S ON THE TUBE

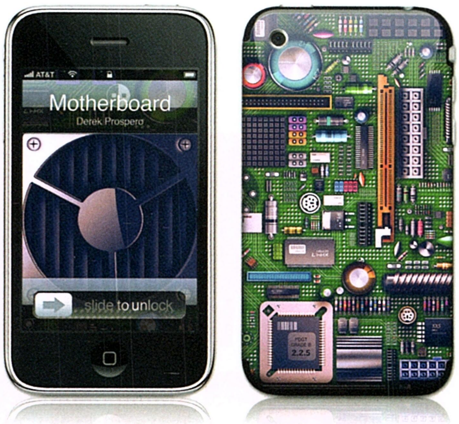
The iPhone and iPod touch are terrific devices for watching video, but sometimes that screen just isn't quite big enough — certainly not if more than one person wants to watch. Not to mention the challenge of sharing audio when there's just one headphone jack.

Enter the My Tube, from AVLabs. Plug just about any dock-based iPod or iPhone* into it, and after a few seconds of authentication you're away. You have to tap the iPod itself to get into video mode, but then the My Tube's remote gives you full control over selecting content, playing, pausing, volume and more. The speakers are more than adequate for a device in this class, but it's the screen that really sets it apart.

There's even a car adapter so you can use your iPod touch plugged into a My Tube to entertain the kids on long journeys.

** The MyTube is not certified to work with iPhone, but it does.*

My Tube, AVLabs
$400
Audion Innovision 1300 300 364
www.audion-mm.com



ART IN HAND

So you thought you were a trend-setter when you bought your iPhone, right? A Style leader, eh? Stand out from the pack? The hundred or so people in the queue behind didn't offer a clue to how unique you'd be?

Not to worry — you can still express your uniqueness through your iPhone, thanks to Gelaskins. Gelaskins are soft cases that wrap around your iPhone (also available for anything from a 4th generation iPod nano up to a 17-inch laptop), protecting it from life's bumps and scrapes. The neat thing about Gelaskins, though, is the wide range of incredible designs available — some of them really quite beautiful. Everything from the geeky (as shown above) to the quite artistic.

What's more the designs change periodically, so if you ever do meet someone else with the same Gelaskin, you can go and renew your uniqueness.

Gelaskins
$24.95 for iPhone/iPod, $50 for laptops
STM 02 8338 0222
www.stmbags.com.au

UNWIRE

In its determination to make those white earphone cables a trademark, Apple has forgotten one small thing: most people hate cables.

Sennheiser understands this, and has responded with the MX-W1 stereo earphones. Plug the transmitter into the headphone port on your iPod, and it sends your music wirelessly to the two earpieces, in proper stereo and everything. Because it plugs into the headphone jack rather than the dock, it will work with any iPod or MP3 player or, well, anything with a headphone jack really.

MX-W1, Sennheiser
$900
Syntec, 02 9910 6700
www.syntec.com.au

GADGET CENTRAL

Gear, gizmos and goodies for your Mac or iPhone

GET A GRIP

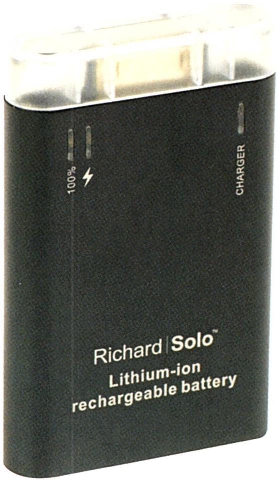
We're surrounded by devices these days — phones, media players, GPS and more. What we're not surrounded by is places to put them. It can get very messy.

A novel solution has arrived from Joby, the company that makes Gorillapod tripods that can set your camera up just about anywhere at just about any angle. The Gorillapod Go Go does basically the same thing, but for the rest of your devices. You can use the Go Go like a tripod to mount your GPS on the dash where you can see it, or you can use the arms to wrap your phone around the steering wheel for easy access (when you've pulled over to the side of the road, of course).

Oh, and it's a good tripod for your camera too.

Gorillapod Go Go, Joby
$35 to $40
Maxwell International 1300 882 517
www.maxwell.com.au

Southeast to Millbrook Road West
MARCHWOOD
TEBOURBA
REDBRIDGE
Arrival
5:00pm
Turn In
0.8mi
56/123
PWR
END



YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED

It's a universal lament of mobile phone users — you're in the middle of a call, and the battery conks out. Or you're about to make an important call, but you're not sure if there's enough juice to last.

Well, if you have an iPhone, you're in luck. You can buy a battery pack you can fit in your pocket and, when needed, plug into your iPhone to effectively double the battery life. One such is designed by Richard | Solo and simply plugs into the dock port on the bottom of the phone — no piggybacking, so it still works even if your phone is in a case (provided the case affords access to the dock).

The charger itself charges with a now-standard mini-USB connector, one of which was included in the Voltaic backpack showcased last issue. That backpack plus this backup battery means a green way to keep your iPhone running.

Backup battery pack for iPhone, Richard | Solo
$80
UCC Australia 02 9975 5354
www.ucc-online.com.au

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Everyuone wants to be more conscious of their impact on the environment these days, and computer users are no exception. Giving your hard drive a bamboo chassis will either make it more eco-friendly or more tempting as panda food — perhaps both.

The [re]drive features a chassis made from plantation bamboo and recycled aluminium, as well as 100 percent recyclable packaging. It also uses an Energy Star power adapter (though you'll need to obtain your own power adapter for use in Australia) and a special low-power drive to save up to 90 percent in power consumption. Or if you don't care about the environmental side, just think of it as a really cool-looking case.

Just watch out for pandas.

[re]drive, SimpleTech
$US159 for 500GB
Available online
www.simpletech.com

YOU HANDSOME DEVIL

There is no denying that the iPhone and iPod touch are vey pleasant on the eyes. The only time they're less than optimal is when the devices are asleep or turned off — at that point there's this dull grey screen on the front not doing anything but looking switched off.

Fear not. Cygnett comes to the rescue with the GrooveShield Optic. When the device is off or asleep, the screen becomes a mirror. Need to check the lipstick before dashing out? About to head into a meeting and suddenly remembered you ate spinach for lunch? A quick glance at your iPhone will set your mind at ease.

Oh yeah, it also protects against scratches.

GrooveShield Optic, Cygnett
$10
info@cygnett.com
www.cygnett.com

BLACKBERRIES NEED CARE TOO

It may surprise you to learn that not everyone has an iPhone yet. Some people, believe it or not, are quite happy using their BlackBerries as they have for years to collect their e-mail — the thing the BlackBerry is best at.

Well you BlackBerry owners needn't feel left out of the fashion stakes, as Case-Mate manufactures a range of very sturdy and stylish cases for various BlackBerry models as well as the iPhone. Pictured is the Curve Signature, which protects the BlackBerry 8300 series phones from scuffs and scrapes. Made of sturdy leather, the case feels very solid and ought to keep your BlackBerry in tip top shape for years to come.

By which time you'll probably have an iPhone …

Curve Signature, Case-Mate
Macs-4-u, 08 9274 7111
www.macs-4-u.com/store

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

You're in your usual café, and you see a person across the way wearing an unusual, blinking device jacked into both an iPod and a set of earbuds. That's right, they're blinking for you.

The blinking device is an i2i Stream — a short-range transmitter-receiver about the size of a box of Tic Tacs. To listen to that person's music, you need only tune your own Stream to the same channel — the i2i blinks one of seven colours to indicate its transmission frequency. Sold in pairs for $US100 (no Australian distribution yet) and compatible with any audio device (TV, stereo, game consoles, portable media players, and more), the i2i supports an unlimited number of connections to a single transmitter in a range of around ten metres.

I2i Stream, i2i
$US100
Available online
www.i2igear.com

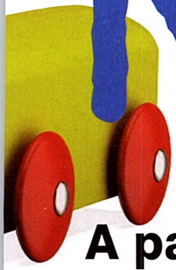
⌘-3

Christopher Breen

Hotlinks

www.datadesktech.com
LittleFingers keyboard
www.chestercreektech.com
www.kidzmouse.com
Kid-friendly mice and trackballs
www.spectorsoft.com
Spector
www.hanynet.com/noobproof
Control specific firewall ports
www.k9webprotection.com
Free web filtering
macworld.com/3871
netTrekker

The Kid-safe Mac



A parent's guide to setting up OS X

Like puppies, children can be adorable even as they create chaos – splashing about in mud puddles or shrieking on the playground. Also like their canine companions, kids at play can be unintentionally destructive and heedless of the dangers around them. This is especially true when it comes to the family computer. In their early years kids can unwittingly put your data at risk or even physically damage machines. And as your children grow up and feel more at home with the computer, they become vulnerable to the internet's unsavoury elements.

Luckily, when it comes to childproofing your Mac, you don't have to look far. Leopard, Apple's latest operating system, comes with a Parental Controls feature that's packed with settings to help you protect your Mac's data, simplify its interface, and keep the bad stuff at bay. And if Leopard doesn't do a thorough enough job, you can turn to third-party utilities.

In the following pages, I'll offer advice on how to configure your Mac for both younger and older children. Even if you don't have kids, these tools can still be useful – for example, if you run a school computer lab or an internet café, or if you have a Mac that's open to the public. At the end of the day, the important thing is to keep both your machine – and innocent users – out of harm's way.

Leopard's parental controls.

Parental Controls enable you to constrain what kids can do on the Mac. How severely you limit access depends on what you believe they can handle, in terms of both complexity and content.

Create a new account. Whether you're setting Parental Controls for a young kid or a boisterous teen, start by creating a special user account for that child. (If such an account already exists, you can skip the next two paragraphs.)

Log in as an administrator, launch System Preferences, and go to the Accounts preference pane. Click on the lock icon and enter your administrator password. Choose Login Options and turn on the Enable Fast User Switching option. Now add another user by clicking on the plus-sign (+) button below the list of accounts. Choose Managed With Parental Controls from the New Account pop-up menu, select a user name (and a short name if you like), and enter a password that your kid will be able to remember. Click on Create Account.

Select the new account from the list on the left, then call your kid over to pick an icon. Got an iSight? Put your child in front of the camera, click on the current icon, select Edit Picture, and click on the Take A Video Snapshot button (funny faces encouraged). You can tweak the resulting picture by moving the size slider or by clicking on the image and dragging to reposition it. Select Set when you're done.

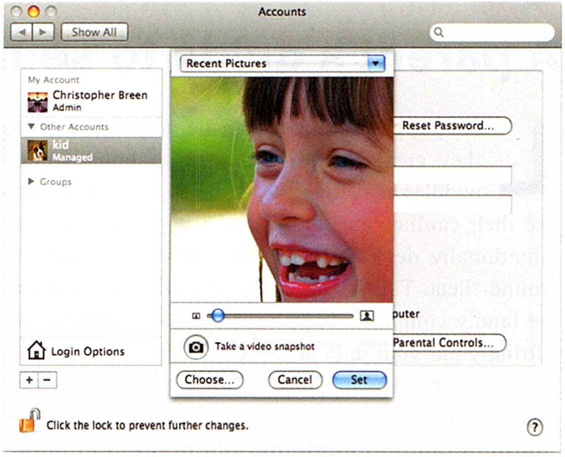
The Enable Parental Controls setting should now be selected. Do not turn on the Allow User To Administer This Computer option (if you try, your Mac will issue a warning). Now click on the Open Parental Controls button to start configuring them. (To modify settings in the future, go directly to the Parental Controls preference pane.)

In the next screen, you have the option to enable the Manage Parental Controls From Another Computer feature. This lets you configure Parental Controls and check log files from another Mac on your network (provided it's running Leopard) – convenient if your kid's computer is in her room and you don't want to be caught "snooping." To do this, turn on the feature, then launch the Parental Controls preference pane from another computer on the network – you'll see the name of your child's Mac under Other Computers. Click on the lock icon at the bottom of the screen and enter your administrator's password. Select the name of the Mac you're managing and enter the administrator name and password for that machine. Your kid's account should now appear below the name of her computer. Click on that account to access all of the Parental Controls settings as if you were on the actual machine.

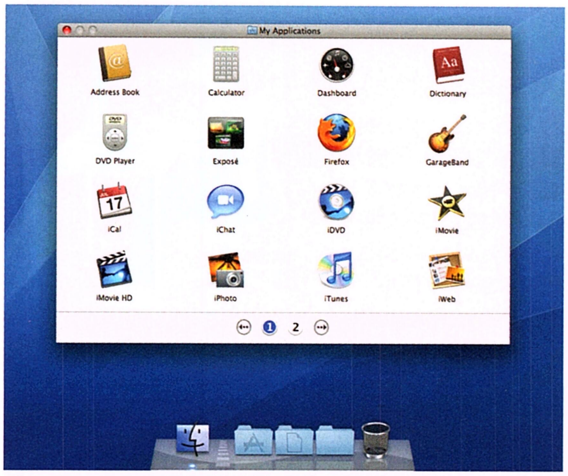
Regardless of whether you're managing an account remotely or from the computer you're sitting in front of, when you select your child's account you'll see five tabs – System, Content, Mail & iChat, Time Limits, and Logs. The settings you choose in each will vary depending on the child's age.

Shield young kids. With young children (eight and under), you have two goals: to simplify the interface (while protecting your data) and keep them away from inappropriate content. With Leopard's Parental Controls settings, you can go a long way toward accomplishing both objectives. Some of these controls may also come in handy if you have older kids.

Simplify the system. If you're worried about overwhelming your tot with icons, menus, and other doodads, you can declutter the interface by selecting Use Simple Finder (under the System tab). Once this is enabled, your kid sees just four Finder menus: Apple, Finder, File, and Help. The Dock contains icons of active programs; the My Applications, Documents, and



The personal touch. Make your kids feel more at home by letting them choose their own account graphic.



Keep it simple. The Simple Finder sets up a friendly, uncomplicated interface that young children can navigate easily.

Shared folders; and the Trash. That's it. Gone are the desktop hard-drive icon, Finder-window sidebars, and contextual menus on the desktop. Items inside the My Applications, Documents, and Shared folders appear in icon view; your kid can launch them with a single click, but can't move anything around. The Apple menu offers Sleep and Log Out commands, but there's no option for restarting or shutting down.

If your child craves a sense of independence, you can let her customise her desktop. Using the Fast User Switching menu (which appears in the right corner of the menu bar), log into the new account. Control-click on the Dock and choose Dock Preferences; select Show All to expose all the preferences, then click on Desktop & Screen Saver (there's no System Preferences entry under the Apple menu in this mode). Show her all the desktop patterns, and have her pick the one she likes best. You can switch to the Screen Saver tab and let her choose one of those, too. Don't worry if your kid figures out how to open System Preferences on her own: she won't be able to tinker with anything important – Network, Parental Controls, and Sharing settings, for example – without an administrator's name and password.

Log out of your child's account and return to the Parental Controls window in the administrator account. Below the Use Simple Finder check box, you'll see the Only Allow Selected Applications option. Enabling this feature lets you turn off single applications as well as groups of programs. For example, if you uncheck the Internet box, your child won't be able to use iChat, Mail, or Safari. Click on the triangle next to Other to reveal all of the programs in the Applications folder. By default, only Apple's stock programs are enabled. Uncheck any that you want to remove from your kid's Applications folder.

Hotlinks

www.wacom.com.au
Bamboo Fun graphics tablet
tinyurl.com/KidpixAustralia
Get KidPix 3X
www.ambientdesign.com
Get ArtRage 2.5
www.plasq.com
Get Doozla
www.fisher-price.com/au
Kid-Tough digital camera
www.radtech.com
www.klearscreen.com
Clean up little messes
www.iskin.com
www.zcover.com
Prevent little messes
www.kidsdomain.com
Find old educational software

Kid-friendly add-ons

A Mac can do wonders for kids. With the following additions, you can enhance the experience even more.

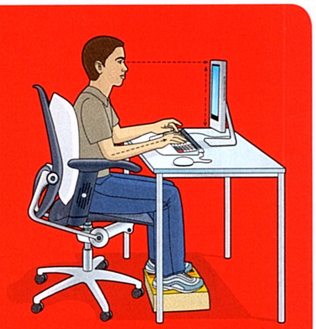
Scribble pads. Wacom's Bamboo Fun small tablet includes an easy-to-grip stylus and copies of Adobe Photoshop Elements and Corel Painter Essentials. If those are too advanced, try Software MacKiev's KidPix Deluxe 3X, Ambient Design's ArtRage, or plasq's Doozla.

Easy snapper. Fisher-Price's Kid-Tough Digital Camera has a built-in flash, stores up to 60 640-by-480-pixel images (it also has an SD memory card slot), and is packed in a case sturdy enough to withstand playground drops; it's a great gateway into photography for kids three and up.

Protective armour. Children under the age of nine have a supernatural knack for getting jam and crumbs into every nook and cranny. Get a screen-cleaning system, such as RadTech's OmniCleanz or Meridrew Enterprises' iKlear Apple Polish Cleaning Kit. To protect your keyboard, consider a plastic overlay from iSkin or zCover.

Old educational software. Most educational software doesn't require a fast Intel processor or Leopard. Also, there's still a lot of kids' software floating around that works only in the Classic environment. (You can find links to such software at Kaboose. Remember: Leopard can't run OS 9 programs.)

Healthy computing for kids



Children are spending more time on their Macs than ever before. And like adults, kids are vulnerable to repetitive stress and other overuse injuries. That's why it's essential to set up their workstation properly — and to teach them to use computers safely.

Adult computer setups may accommodate bigger kids, but they usually aren't right for smaller children. You can do a lot to fix that without spending a fortune.

Choose a proper chair. If you have an ergonomic office chair, try fitting it to your kid. The back should fully support her when she's sitting with her knees and torso bent slightly more than 90 degrees. If the seat is too deep, fill the gap behind her back with a cushion. Likewise, use a phone book to keep her feet from dangling. If the seat's still too large, try a smaller, non-adjustable chair. It should be sturdy enough to provide support without wobbling, and it shouldn't put too much pressure on the backs of her thighs.

Set the desktop height. Now have your child take a seat. Ask her to hold her upper arms comfortably by her side, elbows bent slightly more than 90 degrees, wrists and hands outstretched. The desktop should be a bit lower than her hands so she can reach the keyboard and mouse without bending her wrists. In some cases, you can compensate for a desk that's too tall or too short by using a movable keyboard tray. If that doesn't do the trick, you may need to find a smaller or adjustable desk.

Position the monitor. The top of the display should be at or slightly below eye level so that she won't have to tilt her head up or down to read the screen. Choose a monitor that lets you adjust its vertical position.

Fit the mouse and keyboard. If your child has to stretch her hands to type key combinations, you may want to purchase a child-friendly keyboard like Datadesk Technologies' LittleFingers (see "Hotlinks"). Companies such as Chester Creek Technologies and KidzMouse (see "Hotlinks") sell inexpensive mice and trackballs that are designed for kids. Also, make sure your kid takes a break every ten minutes or so — just putting down her hands and closing her eyes for a few seconds should be sufficient. — *Franklin Tessler*

Finally, note the four options at the bottom of the window: Can Administer Printers, Can Burn CDs And DVDs, Can Change Password, and Can Modify The Dock (this last one is greyed out if you've enabled the Simple Finder). For young children, you should disable all of these options.

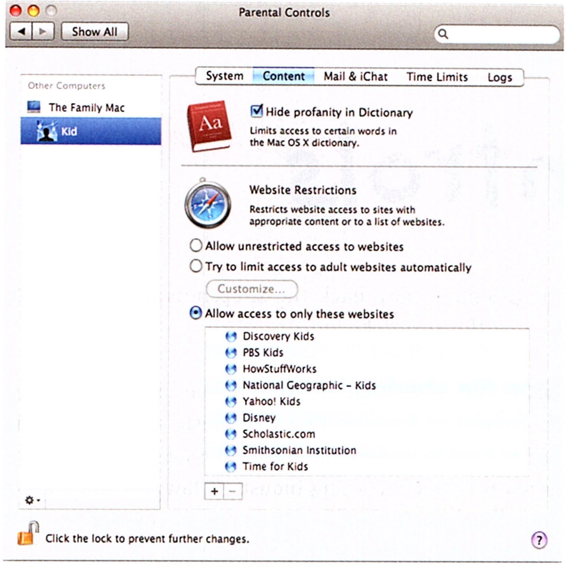
Configure content. If you don't want to cut off your kids from the internet completely, you'll probably want to control what they can access. Parental Controls' Content tab can help you determine which sites your children can visit.

At the top of the Content pane, the Hide Profanity In Dictionary check box does what it says. It won't eliminate scientific terms for the body's intimate parts, nor will it hide literate euphemisms for sexual congress, but it does omit coarse four-letter words.

The Website Restrictions area allows three levels of control. Allow Unrestricted Access To Websites grants your kid access to everything. Try To Limit Access To Adult Websites Automatically attempts to eliminate sites containing adult content by previewing pages before they're displayed and looking for keywords that indicate the site may be inappropriate for children. If you decide on this method, you can also choose to always block or always allow specific web sites by clicking on the Customize button and adding URLs.

For complete control over your child's online activities, use the Allow Access To Only These Websites option, which lets you create a whitelist of web sites – a collection of URLs you've approved. Apple gives you a head start by populating this list with nine child-appropriate sites, including Discovery Kids, National Geographic Kids, and Smithsonian Institution. You can add other sites by clicking on the plus-sign button, choosing Add Bookmark from the menu that appears, and entering a title and address. If your child clicks on a link from an approved site that leads to a location outside the host domain, a page appears informing her that the destination site can't be accessed.

If you let your kid use Google to search the web, you'll also want to restrict the kinds of sites that show up in search results. Log into your child's account, head to Google's home page, and select the Preferences link. Sign in to bring up Google's Preferences page, then enable the Use Strict Filtering option in the SafeSearch Filtering area. This helps prevent sexually explicit web sites from appearing during searches.



☑ Hide profanity in Dictionary
Limits access to certain words in the Mac OS X dictionary.

Website Restrictions
Restricts website access to sites with appropriate content or to a list of websites.

○ Allow unrestricted access to websites
○ Try to limit access to adult websites automatically
● Allow access to only these websites

- Discovery Kids
- PBS Kids
- HowStuffWorks
- National Geographic - Kids
- Yahoo! Kids
- Disney
- Scholastic.com
- Smithsonian Institution
- Time for Kids

Click the lock to prevent further changes.

Controlling content. You can use Leopard's Parental Controls to limit web browsing to specific sites.

Monitor older kids. Once your children hit the double digits, they'll feel more than ready to spread their wings and take on the responsibilities of seasoned computer users. You, however, might not be ready to give them this kind of freedom, particularly when they may not fully understand the problems that can result from talking to strangers, sharing files across the internet, and spending too much time on the computer. Parental Controls can curb some of these activities as well.

Control lines of communication. By the time a child turns ten, he may be ready to have his own e-mail account and spend time chatting with friends. Even if you decide to grant him the privilege, you will probably want to place some limits on his communiqués.

OS X lets you rein in your kid's Mail and iChat activities by defining whom he can correspond with. Go to Parental Controls' Mail & iChat tab, enable the Limit Mail or Limit iChat option (or both), then click on the plus-sign button to start adding approved contacts. (Use the drop-down menu to add AIM or Jabber identities rather than e-mail addresses.) As you enter contacts, you have the option to add them to your Address Book. The contacts end up in your database, not your child's (as the administrator, you're the keeper of contacts for this user). Instead of entering addresses manually, you can click on the downward triangle to select contacts from your Address Book.

Parental Controls can also notify you when your child attempts to send e-mails to unapproved recipients. At the bottom of the Mail & iChat window, enable the Send Permission Requests To option and enter your e-mail address. Whenever your youngster attempts to contact someone who isn't on the list, a notice appears telling him that he doesn't have permission to send a message to that recipient. If he clicks on the Ask Permission button, Mail forwards you a message asking if it's OK to send the e-mail, along with an Always Allow button for approving the request (saying yes adds the address to the list of approved contacts). You can receive messages on any Mac, though it must be running Leopard's version of Mail. Other e-mail clients do not support this remote-approval feature – you'll get a copy of the message, but you won't be able to grant permission.

If you use Parental Controls to manage iChat, only approved contacts end up in your child's buddy list (he won't be able to add anyone). He'll also receive warnings that the computer's administrator can monitor his iChat conversations. (I'll explain how shortly.)

Set limits. You know how easy it is to get addicted to your Mac and sit in front of it for hours on end – but you don't necessarily want your kids to do the same. Using Parental Controls' Time Limits feature, you can manage the number of minutes or hours they spend on the Mac.

Under the Time Limits tab, you'll see three ways to configure your Mac: Weekday Time Limits, Weekend Time Limits, and Bedtime. To set weekday or weekend hours, check the appropriate box and use the slider to set the amount of time your kid can be logged in – anything from 30 minutes to eight hours a day in half-hour increments. When there's 15 minutes left, a warning will appear on screen indicating that it's time to wrap things up. There's an option to add more time (ranging from 15 minutes to the rest of the day), but doing so requires an administrator's name and password. When time runs out, the account switches to the Mac's log-in screen and can't be accessed again until midnight, except by the administrator.

The Bedtime option lets you specify when your child can't use the computer. There are separate settings for school nights (Sunday through Thursday) and weekends (Friday and Saturday).

Keep tabs. You want to trust your children, but it's nice to know that your trust is merited. Parental Controls' Logs feature can help. Under the Logs tab, you'll see a window that includes Websites Visited, Websites Blocked, Applications, and iChat. Highlight Websites Visited, for example, and you'll see those pages that he's either accessed directly in Safari, or loaded as part of a visited web site (an advertisement, say). You can double-click on any site to view the page yourself. You can also check logs from another Mac on the network if you have enabled the option to manage a computer remotely.

The Applications entry tells you which programs your kid opened and for how long. If you find a program that you'd like to forbid, select it and click on the Restrict button. The iChat entry lists the people he has chatted with. Click on the triangle next to a name to view a list of chat sessions. Double-click on one of these files, and you can read what both sides said.

Beyond parental controls

Configured correctly, Parental Controls are remarkably effective – but you may want to do more. Your next steps depend on how strict you want to be and how much you trust your children. Beyond talking to them, there are several ways to allow them access to the online world while retaining some control.

Keep an eye out. Even if you trust your children, you might feel better if you can track their activities (and, even better, if you tell them you're doing so). Parental Controls' logs provide some monitoring options, but you can take this even further.

If you and your child have separate Macs, you can watch his screen via Leopard's Screen Sharing feature. First log on to his Mac as an administrator and switch on Screen Sharing in the Sharing preference pane. In Allow Access For, select Only These Users, click on the plus-sign button, and choose Administrators.

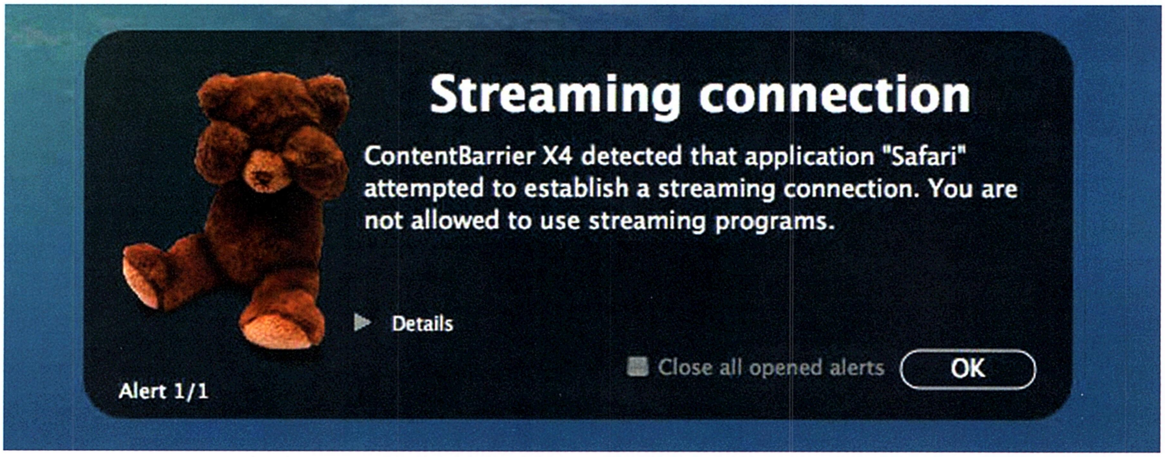
To observe, go back to your Mac and, from the Finder, choose Go: Network. Locate the name of your kid's Mac, launch it, and click on Share Screen. You can now see what he's doing on his machine – and even control it. Your child can try to cut you off (by choosing Disconnect, and then your Mac's IP address, from the Screen Sharing menu in the menu bar), but you'll still remain connected.

If your family shares a single Mac, SpectorSoft's Spector for Mac OS (see "Hotlinks") takes frequent snapshots of the screen and can log keystrokes without your children's knowledge. When you want to see what your kids were doing while using the computer, launch the program, play back the snapshots as a movie, or look at the keystroke log.

Stop file sharing. For kids, it may be hard to resist the appeal of downloading free music and videos (and just as hard to understand the legal issues). If you'd rather not have the recording industry's lawyers banging on your door, you'll want to put an end to any peer-to-peer file-sharing. Leopard's firewall can help.

Open the Security preference pane, click on the Firewall tab, and select the Allow Only Essential Services option. This will also disable screen sharing, file sharing, and other such services. If that's too limiting, choose Set Access For Specific Services And Applications instead, which keeps all enabled sharing services running. If you're concerned that your kids are doing illegal swapping, tell the firewall to block incoming connections from any file-sharing programs on the Mac (click on the plus sign to add the program, and from the pull-down menu to the right, select Block Incoming Connections). Better yet, remove those programs altogether.

Some BitTorrent clients use port forwarding to work around the firewall, which means you can't stop downloads, no matter which firewall setting you choose. To see whether your kids have been downloading files using a BitTorrent client, click on the Advanced button at the bottom of the Security window and check the Enable Firewall Logging option. Select the Open Log button to view a list of activities. If you see entries for



Streaming connection

ContentBarrier X4 detected that application "Safari" attempted to establish a streaming connection. You are not allowed to use streaming programs.

No streaming. ContentBarrier X4 can block all streaming content in your kids' web browser.

BitTorrent clients (such as Transmission, Azureus, or BitTorrent), you can uninstall them.

Users who are savvy about security may find it frustrating that Leopard's firewall doesn't provide an easy way to open or close specific ports. Hanynet's free NoobProof (see "Hotlinks") offers a simple interface for opening and closing ports within Leopard's firewall.

Limit content. Leopard's internet controls for parents are a vast improvement over earlier offerings, but they still may not fully meet your needs. With the help of robust filtering utilities and web services, you can gain more control.

All-in-one. If you're looking for comprehensive control over your kids' Mac activities, check out Intego's ContentBarrier X4, which can halt or filter a number of activities for each account on your Mac (including those already restricted by Parental Controls).

For instance, you can forbid access to questionable web sites, block streaming content, filter e-mail and chats for inappropriate language, and block peer-to-peer file sharing and newsgroup access (see the screenshot "No streaming"). ContentBarrier can also keep a log of your kids' activities and e-mail it to you as often as once an hour. The program is great if you haven't upgraded to Leopard, or if you find that Leopard's Parental Controls don't provide enough control over certain activities.

Web filters. Are you primarily concerned about your kids' web surfing habits? Several services can shield children from objectionable content. Blue Coat's free K9 Web Protection service (see "Hotlinks") creates an internet proxy on your Mac to filter and block inappropriate web sites (as of press time, only a beta version for Mac OS X was available). The service sorts sites by category, such as pornography, illegal drugs, social networking, and gaming. You can instruct the filter to block certain categories while ignoring others. You can still allow or bar specific sites.

Google is a terrific resource, but even if you turn on its filtering features, it's easy to get lost in all the search results – and distinguishing bad information from good is difficult even for adults. For a nominal fee, Thinkronize's netTrekker home (see "Hotlinks") acts as a search portal, directing kids to teacher-approved Web sites that contain the knowledge they need to complete their schoolwork.

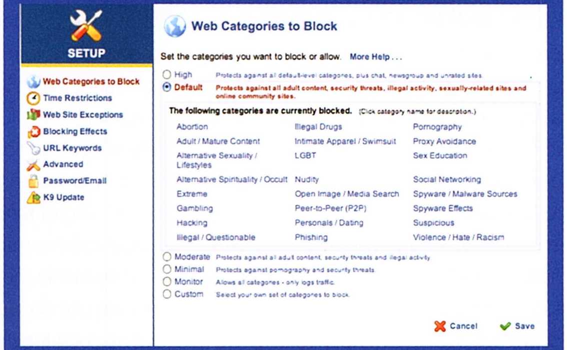
Augmenting the age of innocence. The Mac is a wonderful resource for children: not only is it an expansive educational resource, it's also an art and movie studio, a killer jukebox, and a sophisticated communications device. Sure, all that power can become a problem if left in inexperienced, unguided hands. With these tips and the proper parental oversight, you can control the Mac's power so that it enhances your children's growth and development.

The foibles of filtering

Parental Controls and some third-party utilities and filters promise to protect kids from unseemly content. How effective are they? To find out, I put propriety aside and went spelunking in the darker corners of the web.

Parental Controls. I started by searching for every naughty word I could think of. Combined with Google's filtering powers, OS X's Parental Controls' web-site filtering option largely thwarted my web searches. The scientific names for body parts and sexual acts turned up appropriately clinical results without sleaze. Coarser words produced an "Oops! You Can't See Pages on This Website" message. And Parental Controls' logs enumerated my every search. I was, however, able to sneak past Parental Controls when I plugged in some innocent-sounding adult web sites.

Outside software. I had mixed results with third-party programs and services that filter content. The best was Blue Coat's K9 Web Protection service (still in beta for Mac OS X). It blocked any adult sites I attempted to visit. Intego's ContentBarrier X4 startled me more than once with its loud buzzing alarm when I attempted to access verboten URLs. Like Parental Controls, though, it didn't block innocent-sounding test web sites. I was, however, able to add these sites to the program's block list.



Web Categories to Block

Set the categories you want to block or allow. More Help . . .

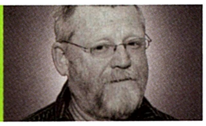
○ High Protects against all default-level categories, plus chat, newsgroup and unrated sites.
● Default Protects against all adult content, security threats, illegal activity, sexually-related sites and online community sites.

The following categories are currently blocked. (Click category name for description.)

Abortion
Adult / Mature Content
Alternative Sexuality / Lifestyles
Alternative Spirituality / Occult
Extreme
Gambling
Hacking
Illegal / Questionable
Illegal Drugs
Intimate Apparel / Swimsuit
LGBT
Nudity
Open Image / Media Search
Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Personals / Dating
Phishing
Pornography
Proxy Avoidance
Sex Education
Social Networking
Spyware / Malware Sources
Spyware Effects
Suspicious
Violence / Hate / Racism

○ Moderate Protects against all adult content, security threats and illegal activity
○ Minimal Protects against pornography and security threats.
○ Monitor Allows all categories - only logs traffic.
○ Custom Select your own set of categories to block.

Make your own judgement. K9's default set of categories may be more restrictive than you'd like for your kids — the "Alternative spirituality" section, for instance, lumps Atheism in with Witchcraft. Thankfully you can customise the settings.



Martin Levins
likes empowering
people to create
using computing
technologies

Head in the clouds

I've been thinking a lot recently about the facilities that schools provide their students and teachers. If we visit most schools, we usually see client machines, connected to a network that connects them to servers and a gateway for access to the internet.

Our traditional use is to use the servers as a repository and the network as a way to access remote data, but is this the best we can do?

About 25 years ago, Sun Microsystems' John Gage or Scott McNealy (it can be attributed to either) said "the network is the computer". At this time computing involved dumb terminals with little or no local storage, with the grunt work being done on a central server.

In the eighties, we got local storage and the emphasis shifted to the client, but now the pendulum is swinging back and the internet is becoming our server and a whole lot more.

Although this is a very first-world way of thinking — nearly 80 percent are not users for personal, financial or access reasons — that's where we're living and by all available evidence where the rest of the world is heading so let's explore.

"Cloud" computing is not new, but the term has had a chequered past. Like a lot of terminology, it has become degenerate and can mean a multitude of stuff. I don't intend to define it here — there are lots of definitions out there — but I do want to look at its implications.

In over 30 years of education technology, I've looked at clouds from both sides now (and am apparently now channelling folk singer Joni Mitchell) Until recently, It's been clouds' allusions I recall (sorry Joni): the Cisco cloud icon that represented the network "out there". It was drawn as a cloud because we didn't really need to worry about where stuff was or how it worked as long as we could get to it and it did what we wanted.

What we wanted tended to be fairly unidimensional — certainly compared to something such as MobileMe or Leopard server's collaboration services. These both are good examples of a 21st century iteration of this … thing.

Now, I've used the work "iteration" intentionally here. We're wobbling left and right like a late night drunk towards an ill-defined destination. In some instances, we're using network tools like our drunk uses a lamppost: more for support than illumination (what a lovely statement that is — I wish I knew who coined it). We could use these tools as a way of changing what we do rather than getting to a certain point in curriculum and saying "oh yeah, insert ICT here".

Ask this question: what is the role of role of our traditional school networks when "out there" in the cloud is the silver lining of functionalities. Your first thoughts here may be Google Docs — they mimic the "Office" applications that we use on laptops and desktops but as such they are not really what I'm talking about here.

Have a look at DabbleDB (see "Hotlinks"), which is an example of the way things are going for the next iteration. If you've taught databases in the classroom: you've fiddled with FileMaker or ached with Access, you'll know the frustration of trying to deal with data organisation. It takes a long time and a lot of experience to construct a database beyond the simple party invitations list.

DabbleDB builds complex relationships for you on the fly. It's powerful enough to use as a full-blown Customer Relationship Manager and it resides on a remote server: part of the cloud.

I wonder if Apple has realised this? Its concentration on the iPhone would indicate that it is concentrating on the window to the cloud. Is its lack of attention to great products such as iWeb and, most recently, Leopard collaboration services, further evidence of this?

It's curious that the iPhone can't edit Leopard server wikis and blogs, and iWeb still lacks comments for its blogs and other features are found only if the client is a member of MobileMe — even though a lot of Apple schools use its servers which can do the same heavy lifting.

Hey, I'd pay cash money for our students to access our own version of MobileMe, hosted on our servers. This seems unlikely.

The Federal government's commitment to 100Mbps fibre to each school will mean that we could use Apple's MobileMe, rather than a local server, and take advantage of its synergies with iLife — but most schools have MobileMe and other similar sites blocked, dividing what students can achieve at school and at home.

There are serious questions here.

The Mac remains strong in the media-rich areas that students love. Whilst schools block Web 2.0 sites, Mac schools have an advantage even if MobileMe is not available, but they won't have this forever.

The clouds are gathering.

Hotlinks

tinyurl.com/6p83fy
Kevin Kelly's discussion of the first 5000 days of the web and where it may be heading
dabbledb.com/demo/
How databases should be!

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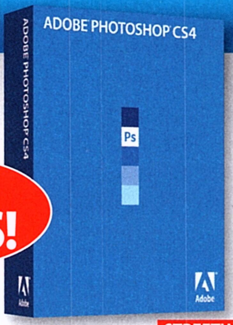

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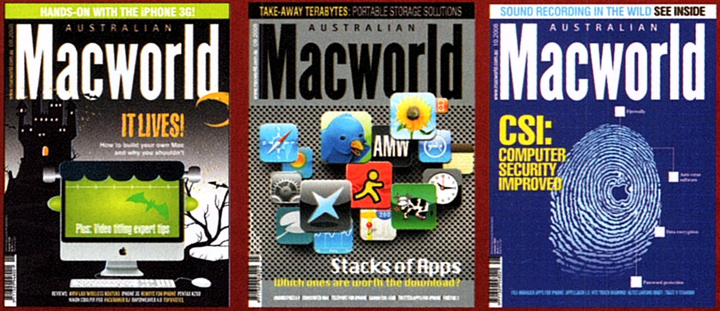
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Plus: Video titling expert tips
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28813_1

A Database for the rest of us

If your data has outgrown your spreadsheet, try Bento.

Are you a list fiend? If so, your hard drive is probably littered with tables and spreadsheets — from soccer rosters and wedding guest lists, to information about your personal assets. Sure, lists lend themselves to the linear and cellular format of a spreadsheet — but if they grow to more than a few dozen records, or if you're constantly entering the same information again and again, spreadsheets can quickly become unwieldy.

Although databases are ideal for managing large lists, many people find them intimidating. Thanks to FileMaker's Bento, they no longer have reason to fear. Bento is about as easy to use as a database program can get.

Make the switch. Take Celsius7, a musician who has spent years collecting information about the people who attend his concerts, buy his CDs, and purchase other band paraphernalia. He uses this information to send out letters and e-mail messages, figure out which products are selling the most, and evaluate where he should be performing. Initially a spreadsheet seemed like the perfect solution for collecting this information, but now that it contains more than 1000 records, managing this data has become much more difficult.

Celsius7's fan list contains contact information (name, address, phone number, and e-mail address), and details on items that each person has purchased, such as CDs, hoodies, and t-shirts. Here I'll divide the data in Celsius7's spreadsheet into two new Bento libraries — that's Bento-speak for databases. One library is for his fan list; the other is for merchandise. I'll then explain how to link the two together to make the data easier to access and manage.

Import information. Celsius7 created his spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel 2008. You can also import data from Apple's Numbers. Either way, you'll have to do some prep work before bringing the data into Bento. Start by making sure that the first row in the spreadsheet corresponds to the fields you want in your database. In this case that includes: First Name, Last Name, Age, Address, City, State, Postcode, Phone, and E-mail. The spreadsheet also includes columns for each item Celsius7 sells; he has placed an X under any product that a fan has purchased (see the screenshot "Raw data").

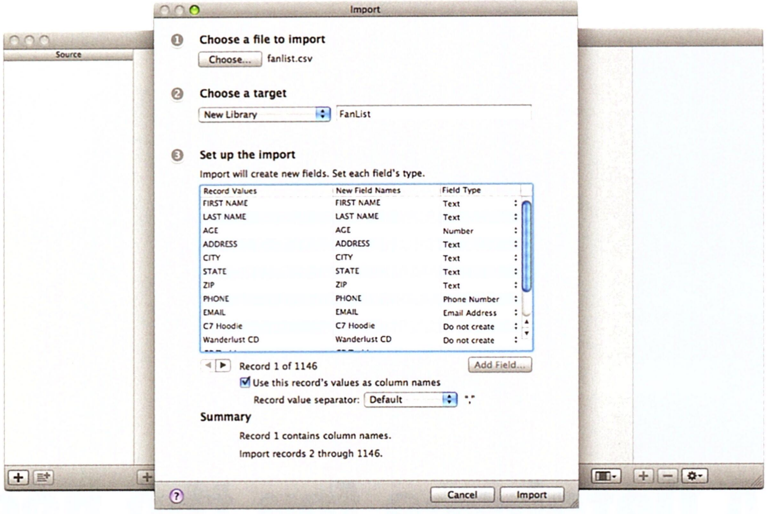
Save the spreadsheet as a comma-delimited text file. If you're using Excel, go to File: Save As, and select Comma Separated Values (.csv) from the Format pop-up menu; in Numbers, go to File: Export, click on the CSV button, set Text Encoding to Western (Mac OS Roman), and click on Next. Assign the file a name, choose a location where you want to save the file, and click on Export.

Launch Bento. Unless you have changed Bento's default preferences, you should see the Home pane — click on Start Using Bento. The program's main window consists of three areas. On the left is the Source drawer, which contains all of your Bento libraries. On the right is the Fields drawer, which shows all of the fields in the currently selected library. The middle window displays records from your selected library. If you don't see all three windows, go to the View menu and select Show: All.

Now you're ready to import the spreadsheet (File: Import). In section 1 of Bento's Import dialog box, click on the Choose button and locate your CSV file. Section 2 gives you the option to import the data into a new library or an existing one. Make sure New Library is selected in the pop-up menu, and name it something like FanList. Section 3 lets you set data formatting by selecting a field type (text, number, date, phone number, and so on). For example, instructing Bento to import a field as an e-mail address (change the EMAIL Field Type to E-mail Address) later allows you to send a message to that person from within the database (see the screenshot "Export, import").

You can also choose to not import specific fields. In this instance, you don't want to include any of the merchandise information. So for all the merchandise-related fields, set the field type to Do Not Create. When you're ready, click on the Import button to create a FanList library.

The forthcoming Bento 2 promises to cut out most of this prep work by allowing you to drag-and-drop Excel and Numbers spreadsheets without going through a CSV list first.



❶ **Choose a file to import**

Choose... fanlist.csv

❷ **Choose a target**

New Library: FanList

❸ **Set up the import**

Import will create new fields. Set each field's type.

Record Values	New Field Names	Field Type
FIRST NAME	FIRST NAME	Text
LAST NAME	LAST NAME	Text
AGE	AGE	Number
ADDRESS	ADDRESS	Text
CITY	CITY	Text
STATE	STATE	Text
ZIP	ZIP	Text
PHONE	PHONE	Phone Number
EMAIL	EMAIL	Email Address
C7 Hoodie	C7 Hoodie	Do not create
Wanderlust CD	Wanderlust CD	Do not create

Record 1 of 1146

☑ Use this record's values as column names

Record value separator: Default ","

Summary

Record 1 contains column names.

Import records 2 through 1146.

Export, import. Bento can automatically create a new library from spreadsheet data you've exported as a comma-delimited text file.

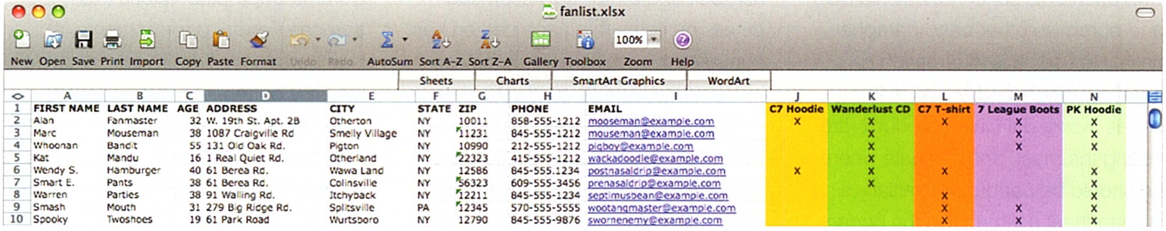
Customise forms. After importing your data, you probably want to do some tweaking. For one thing, Bento defaults to its standard form when you import data. In addition, you may end up with duplicate fields; for instance, Bento creates both a Phone Number List and a separate Phone field (the same is true for e-mail). The List fields are useful if you have more than one e-mail address or phone number, such as work and personal, but in this case having both is unnecessary.

To modify the form, click on the Customize Form button (the hammer and wrench) that appears at the top right corner of the window. From here you can drag and drop fields to rearrange the layout; resize fields (by dragging the box's edge); and adjust the fields' alignment, shading, text size, and other attributes (see the screenshot "Formulating your forms"). You can also alter the theme to something more rockin'. If a field is missing from the form, drag it from the Fields drawer to the location where you want it to appear in your records. To delete either the Phone Number List or the E-mail Address List that Bento created, click on that field and press delete. You can also drag the Phone and E-mail fields over to the left so that everything appears in a single column (leaving the second column open for the merchandise information you'll be adding later).

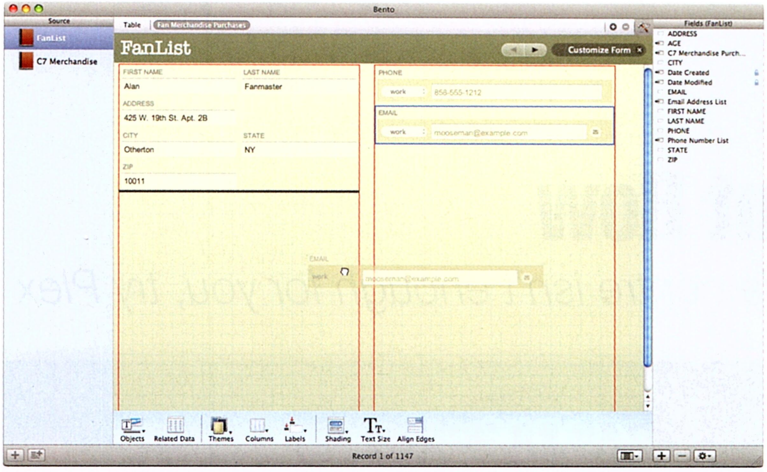
Create a library. Although importing the fan list is simple, you can't then import the merchandise data and automatically link it to the contact information. Instead you'll have to create a merchandise library from scratch, then go back and link each fan's purchases to the items in that database.

To create the merchandise database, click on the large plus-sign (+) button at the bottom of the Source drawer (the other button creates a collection, which is a subset of records from a library). In the New Library window that appears, select the Blank template, change the name to Mer-

Raw data. The original spreadsheet includes fans' contact information as well as data on merchandise they've purchased.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	AGE	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP	PHONE	EMAIL	C7 Hoodie	Wanderlust CD	C7 T-shirt	7 League Boots	PK Hoodie
2	Alan	Fanmaster	32	W. 19th St. Apt. 2B	Otherton	NY	10011	858-555-1212	mooseman@example.com	X	X	X	X	X
3	Marc	Mouseman	38	1087 Craigville Rd	Smelly Village	NY	11231	845-555-1212	mouseman@example.com		X		X	X
4	Whoonan	Bandit	55	131 Old Oak Rd.	Pigton	NY	10990	212-555-1212	pigboy@example.com		X		X	X
5	Kat	Mandu	16	1 Real Quiet Rd.	Otherland	NY	22323	415-555-1212	wackadoodle@example.com		X			
6	Wendy S.	Hamburger	40	61 Berea Rd.	Wawa Land	NY	12586	845-555.1234	postnasaldrip@example.com	X	X	X		X
7	Smart E.	Pants	38	61 Berea Rd.	Colinsville	NY	56323	609-555-3456	prenasaldrip@example.com		X			X
8	Warren	Parties	38	91 Walling Rd.	Itchyback	NY	12211	845-555-1234	septimusbean@example.com			X		X
9	Smash	Mouth	31	279 Big Ridge Rd.	Splitsville	PA	12345	570-555-5555	wootangmaster@example.com			X	X	X
10	Spooky	Twoshoes	19	61 Park Road	Wurtsboro	NY	12790	845-555-9876	swornenemy@example.com			X	X	X



FIRST NAME: Alan
LAST NAME: Fanmaster
ADDRESS: 425 W. 19th St. Apt. 2B
CITY: Otherton
STATE: NY
ZIP: 10011
PHONE: work 858-555-1212
EMAIL: work mooseman@example.com

Formulating your forms. You can easily customise Bento forms by dragging fields from one location to another.

chandise, and click on the Choose button. Your new Merchandise library appears in the Source drawer, the Records window displays a blank form, and two fields pop up in the Fields drawer — Date Created and Date Modified.

Now it's time to start adding fields. Click on the large plus-sign button at the bottom of the Fields drawer to bring up the Create A Field window. The first field should be your product number — select Number as the field type from the box in section 1 and name the field Product ID in section 2. (Section 3 lets you set certain parameters for that field type, such as the number of decimal places.) Click on Create And Continue to add two additional fields: Product Name (field type Text) and Price (field type Currency). When you're done, the Fields drawer should contain these new fields.

You could use the default form view to enter merchandise information, but since there are only a few items, it's easier to work in table view. To do so, click on the Table button at the top of the Records window; check boxes will appear next to all of the fields in the Fields drawer. Select the three fields you created, and then click on the plus-sign button at the bottom of the Records window to generate a new blank record. Type the product name, ID, and price for your first piece of merchandise, then repeat the process for the remaining items.

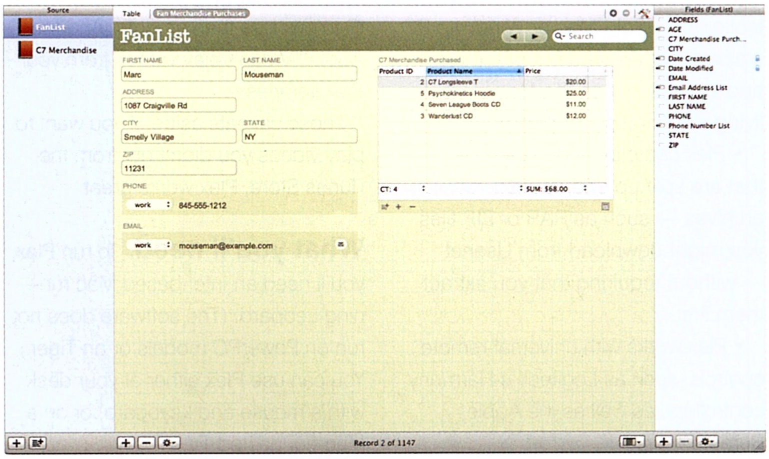
Link your libraries. The final step is to reconnect the fans' records to the items they've purchased. You'll have to do this manually — it's straightforward but time-consuming.

First you must link the two databases together. Select the FanList library, enter Customize Form mode, and drag the Merchandise library from the Source drawer to the top of the second column on the FanList form (or wherever you would like it to appear) — this adds a blank merchandise table.

Find the first record in the FanList Library. At the bottom of the merchandise table, click on the teeny Add Related Records From A List button (labeled with a small plus sign next to several lines). You will see a list of items from your Merchandise library — select all of the products that person purchased (press the ⌘ key to highlight multiple items), and then click on the Add To List button (see the screenshot "The finished product"). You can drag items from the list to your merchandise table; when you're done, close the list window and repeat this process for each fan in the database.

Put it to use. So now that you've set up your database, what next? In Celsius7's case, he can now more easily track CD and merchandise sales, or send out concert mailers and e-mail messages to fans based on where they live.

Say that Celsius7 is planning a concert in Melbourne. With his database in place, he can easily create a collection that only includes people who live in and around that city. Go to File: New Smart Collection. At the top of the Collection window, enter the search criteria. To look for Melbourne-based fans, choose City Contains from the first two drop-down menus, and then enter Melbourne in the blank field. Click on the plus-sign button to tack on another city, such as Geelong (you can also search by state or basically by any field in your database). Click on Find. Every time you add a record that fits these criteria, Bento will automatically update that collection. — *Jeffery Battersby*



FIRST NAME: Marc
LAST NAME: Mouseman
ADDRESS: 1087 Craigville Rd
CITY: Smelly Village
STATE: NY
ZIP: 11231
PHONE: work 845-555-1212
EMAIL: work mouseman@example.com

C7 Merchandise Purchased

Product ID	Product Name	Price
2	C7 Longsleeve T	$20.00
5	Psychokinetics Hoodie	$25.00
4	Seven League Boots CD	$11.00
3	Wanderlust CD	$12.00
CT: 4		SUM: $68.00

The finished product. The completed FanList includes all related records from the Merchandise library; the FanList Fields drawer to the right tells you which fields can still be added to your form.

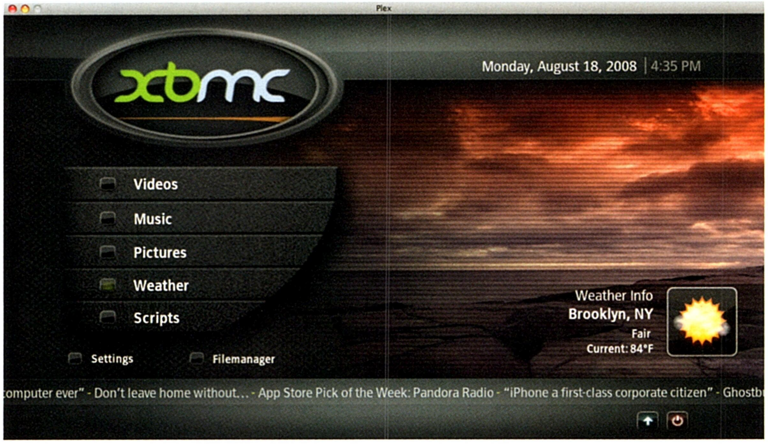
Hotlinks

www.plexapp.com
Get Plex
boxee.tv
Boxee

Beyond Front Row

If Apple's own media centre isn't enough for you, try Plex

OS X's Front Row interface is a fine choice for watching movies or TV episodes you've purchased at the iTunes Store — but if you want to play media from sources other than the iTunes Store, Front Row isn't much use. There's an alternative solution: a free, open-source application called Plex (see "Hotlinks"). Though still in beta as of this writing (and suffering from some pre-release instability), Plex is extremely flexible and customisable — a media player for geeks.


Plex
xbmc
Monday, August 18, 2008 | 4:35 PM
Videos
Music
Pictures
Weather
Scripts
Settings
Filemanager
Weather Info
Brooklyn, NY
Fair
Current: 84°F
omputer ever" - Don't leave home without... - App Store Pick of the Week: Pandora Radio - "iPhone a first-class corporate citizen" - Ghostb

Plex home screen. Plex's home screen offers a main menu for navigation, the date and time, rotating images, a scrolling Apple news ticker, and weather or system information.

Plex versus Front Row. There are plenty of reasons to consider using Plex instead of Front Row. Among the more compelling:

- Plex can play back a wider range of video and audio file formats than Front Row, including AVI, MPEG files you've downloaded via BitTorrent, FLV Flash files you've downloaded from YouTube, and Ogg Vorbis audio files.
- Plex can play media streamed from shared network drives. That means you could host your video collection on an old Mac or Windows PC stashed somewhere out of the way, and still watch it on the Mac in your living room, office, or bedroom.
- Plex can play large video files that are split up and packed into archives — such as RAR or ZIP files you might download from Usenet — without requiring that you extract them first.
- Plex works with universal-remote controls, such as Logitech's Harmony controllers, as well as the Apple Remote.
- Plex has some handy informational widgets — a news ticker, a weather forecast, and system information — built in.
- Plex is more customisable than Front Row: you can add plug-in scripts to get features like YouTube integration, and install a custom skin to update its look-and-feel.

All that said, Plex isn't perfect. It can't play purchases from the iTunes Store. Its handling of photos from iPhoto is less than smooth. And the Apple TV can't play videos from your Plex libraries.

Those caveats aside, if you want to play videos you didn't get from the iTunes Store, Plex works great.

What you'll need. To run Plex, you'll need an Intel-based Mac running Leopard. (The software does not run on PowerPC models or on Tiger.) You can use Plex either at your desk with a mouse and keyboard, or on a Mac-connected TV. Plex can stream media from any other Mac (or Windows PC) on your home network, so the video files themselves can reside on any shared drive in the house. The Mac running the Plex software itself still needs to be connected to the TV. (A Mac mini or a MacBook is best; you won't want an iMac or Mac Pro next to your TV.) And if you want to control Plex remotely from the couch, that Mac will have to be in the line of sight from your seat; next to the television is the best spot.

Finally, you'll need to download the latest release of Plex. Mount the Plex disk image, and then drag and drop Plex into your Applications folder.

Navigating Plex. When you first launch Plex, you'll come to its home screen, which includes the main menu; from there, you can select from Videos, Music, Pictures, Weather, and Scripts. You can use the mouse or your keyboard's up- and down-arrow keys to select any menu item.

To get started, you need to tell Plex where to find your media files. The program maintains a list of Videos, Pictures, and Music sources — paths to folders located on an internal or external hard drive or on the local network. You can set up multiple sources in Plex—one for Jack's Movies, one for Jill's TV Shows, and one for the kids' cartoons. Each computer on your home network can have its own shared video folder where anyone can drop downloaded clips or save ripped DVDs.

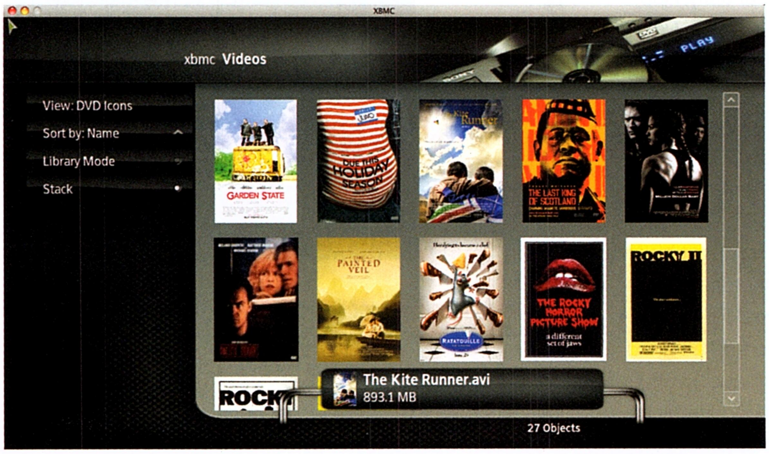
To start watching a clip in your video collection, double-click on Videos, then click on Add Source to browse to the folder where it's stored. Once your video collection folder appears under Plex's Videos source list, simply double-click on it to browse the folder's contents and start watching any file.

You can use the mouse to drive Plex, but some actions (like going into full-screen mode for video playback) require a keyboard (see the table "Plex keystrokes"). If you have a remote control, you'll need to use these keyboard shortcuts only during Plex's initial setup. After that, the buttons on your remote will offer a much more intuitive interface.

By default, videos show up in Plex as boring, generic icons — until you add DVD covers and album art. Plex can automatically download album art for music, DVD covers for movies, and even promo images for TV episodes from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) or any other source you choose.

To get DVD covers for your movie files, for example, browse to your Videos source list. Select the source folder and press C to invoke Plex's contextual menu. There, choose Set Content and, next to This Directory Contains, select Movies. In the art source list, choose where you want Plex to find DVD art. (I've had great success with IMDb, but if you want to display Australian ratings you might prefer ezydvd.com.au.) Depending on how you've stored your video collection, you may want to select Use Folder Names For Lookups (if you've given folders movie or show titles) or Scan Recursively (if you've got subfolders of video clips). Click on OK. Depending on how big your collection is, you may have time to go get yourself a beverage.
Plex will now scan the folder for video files and, based on their file names, add cover art as well as cast and plot-summary information. (To see the director, plot summary, cast details, and trailer, select the video file, press C to invoke the contextual menu, and choose More Information.)

If you have TV episodes in your collection, follow the same process — except set This Directory Contains to TV Shows. In your music collection, select the source folder, press C to invoke the contextual menu, and choose Scan To Library. To get song information for any individual file, select it and press I.



Plex cover art. Once Plex has downloaded DVD cover art and associated it with your video files, you can browse your collection of videos inside Plex as if it were a shelf of DVDs.

Plex Keystrokes

Key	Function
Arrow keys	Navigate menus
Page up and page down	Scroll up and down
Esc	Return to previous menu
Backspace	Go back (or up) a directory
Spacebar	Pause
Tab	Minimise video
.	Move forward one track or chapter
,	Move back one track or chapter
\	Full-screen toggle
-	Volume down
+	Volume up
P	Play
F	Fast forward
C	Contextual menu
R	Rewind
X	Stop
M	Player controls
S	Shut down menu
I	Get info
Q	Queue
Z	Change aspect ratio

Do more with Plex. Plex's open architecture and the long history of XBMC, from which Plex was derived, mean that there are lots of useful scripts out there. To view and install them, choose Scripts from Plex's home screen.

By default, Plex comes with Tetris and a YouTube script that browses and streams clips from the popular video-sharing site. To browse and install other plug-ins available for Plex, run the XBMCscripts script.

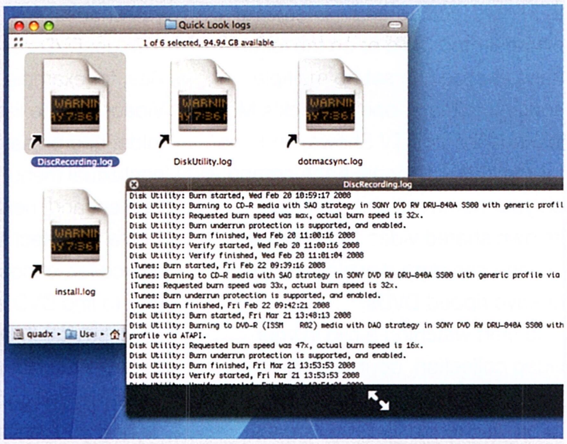
If you find Plex intriguing, keep an eye out for another Mac XBMC port called Boxee (see "Hotlinks"), which adds social-networking features, such as the ability to share files with your friends. Boxee is currently in private alpha testing. — *Gina Trapani*

Quickly access log files

Console (Applications: Utilities) shows you log files generated by OS X as well as by programs that run on it. As such, it can be one of the Mac's most useful troubleshooting tools, letting you find log entries generated for system activity (both routine and unforeseen).

Console not only displays the system-wide system.log file, but also shows logs from the top-level Library/Logs folder, your user account's Logs folder, and the hidden /var/log folder. Because these folders can contain a lot of log files, it can be hard to find the one you want. If you're running Mac OS X 10.5, there's an easy way to find and browse specific log files.

Launch Console. If the list of logs is not visible in the left column, click on the Show Log List button in the toolbar. Next, find the log file you want to monitor, and drag it to the Finder. This creates an alias to that log file, which you can open directly by double-clicking on it. Creating aliases can be handy for quickly scanning certain logs, such as system.log, install.log (which tracks Software Update reports and the results of permission repairs), and mail.log (for debugging issues with Mail). For even quicker access, place aliases in the Dock, the sidebar, or the toolbar, or use Quick Look (see the screenshot "Quick Look log files").



```
Disk Utility: Burn started, Wed Feb 20 10:59:17 2008
Disk Utility: Burning to CD-R media with SAO strategy in SONY DVD RW DRU-840A SS00 with generic profil
Disk Utility: Requested burn speed was max, actual burn speed is 32x.
Disk Utility: Burn underrun protection is supported, and enabled.
Disk Utility: Burn finished, Wed Feb 20 11:00:16 2008
Disk Utility: Verify started, Wed Feb 20 11:00:16 2008
Disk Utility: Verify finished, Wed Feb 20 11:01:04 2008
iTunes: Burn started, Fri Feb 22 09:39:16 2008
iTunes: Burning to CD-R media with SAO strategy in SONY DVD RW DRU-840A SS00 with generic profile via
iTunes: Requested burn speed was 33x, actual burn speed is 32x.
iTunes: Burn underrun protection is supported, and enabled.
iTunes: Burn finished, Fri Feb 22 09:42:21 2008
Disk Utility: Burn started, Fri Mar 21 13:48:13 2008
Disk Utility: Burning to DVD-R (ISSM    R02) media with DAO strategy in SONY DVD RW DRU-840A SS00 with
profile via ATAPI.
Disk Utility: Requested burn speed was 47x, actual burn speed is 16x.
Disk Utility: Burn underrun protection is supported, and enabled.
Disk Utility: Burn finished, Fri Mar 21 13:53:53 2008
Disk Utility: Verify started, Fri Mar 21 13:53:53 2008
```

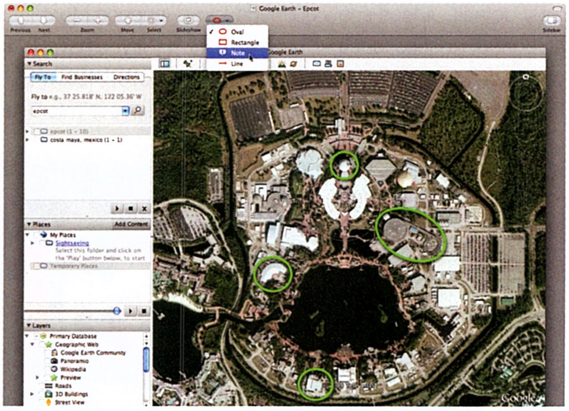
Quick Look log files. In OS X 10.5, you can drag log files from the Console's sidebar to create aliases and then use Quick Look to check their contents.

This trick generally works if the file name ends in .log. With other files, you can still drag them onto the desktop to create aliases, but you can't launch them directly from the Finder or view them in Quick Look. For instance, double-clicking on the CUPS access_log file alias from the Finder opens it in TextEdit, not in Console. — *Rob Griffiths*

Annotate images in Preview

Leopard's version of Preview has some nice improvements, including more annotation capabilities for PDFs. You can also annotate JPEGs, TIFFs, and other non-PDF images — useful for adding call-outs to a screenshot or pointing out locations on a map, for example. Unfortunately, Apple doesn't make this obvious: if you open an image in Preview and then navigate to Tools: Annotate, you'll find that all of the options are greyed out.

However, if you access this same feature via the toolbar, you suddenly become privy to these options. Select View: Customize Toolbar, and drag the Annotate button onto the toolbar. Open a JPEG, TIFF, PNG, or other image file, and then click on and hold that button to see a menu containing four types of annotations: oval, rectangle, note, and line. Select the tool you'd like to use, and then click and drag in the image file to add an annotation (see the screenshot "Improve your image").

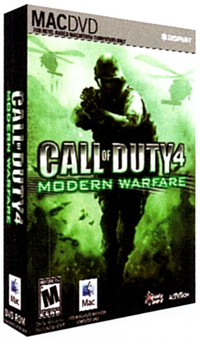


Improve your image. Leopard's Preview lets you add annotations to images, such as these call-outs showing interesting places to visit at Walt Disney World's Epcot.

If you're using one of the shape annotations, press the minus-sign (–) and equal-sign (=) keys to change the line thickness. Bring up the colour picker (Tools: Show Colors) to alter the hue of a shape's outline. If you're working with the Note tool, the colour picker changes the shade of the note's text. You can alter a note's text size using the minus- and equal-sign keys, or choose from the Fonts panel (Tools: Show Fonts). — *Rob Griffiths*

TRY&BYTE

Latest Mac Games



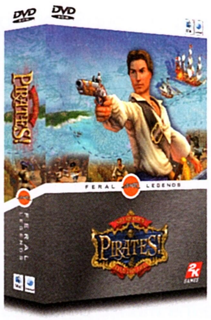
RRP $79.95

Call of Duty 4

Available now!

Featuring a tense storyline, filled with plot twists, the title thrusts players into battle like never before. With amazing special effects players are enlisted into one of the most photo-realistic gaming experiences imaginable.

Rated MA15+ (Strong Violence)



RRP $44.95

Sid Meier's Pirates

From the new Feral Legends series

Discover what it takes to become one of the most famous pirates in history! Based on Sid Meier's original master-piece, Pirates! invites you to live the life of a 17th-century Buccaneer in this epic, open-ended seafaring adventure

Rated PG (Mild Violence)

EdAlive Educational Software

EdAlive comprises of a team of teachers, education professionals and parents dedicated to making high-quality software resources that motivate kids to learn. The result is a series of award winning software that is a mix of quality educational content and fun!

Content from the EdAlive series links to the curriculum of each Australian state and New Zealand with Australian spelling and speech.

RRP $49.95 each

Ultimate Ears

For the last ten years, Ultimate Ears has been designing custom ear monitor products for your favorite professional musicians for use on stage and in the studio. Musicians put their hearts, their souls, their breakups, their memories and their passions into every song and they count on Ultimate Ears products to get the most of out of their music.

Ultimate Ears triple.fi 10
RRP: $499.95

Ultimate Ears super.fi 5 pro
RRP: $349.95

Ultimate Ears super.fi 4vi for iPhone
RRP: $160.00

E&OE. Prices and specifications subject to change without notice. Prices do not include delivery. iPhones not included.

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Move Safari bookmarks bar items

If you need to rearrange entries on your Safari bookmarks bar, you probably do so by simply dragging and dropping them. However, if you'd like to move an item into a folder on your bookmarks bar, you likely find yourself going to the Bookmarks pane (Bookmarks: Show All Bookmarks).

There's an easier way: To move a bookmark or folder of bookmarks into another folder on the bar, hold down ⌘; click on the entry you'd like to move; and then drag it vertically, not horizontally. This pulls the selected item off the bookmarks bar. If you release the mouse button now, the item will disappear in a puff of smoke — but if you drag and drop it onto a folder in the bookmarks bar, the item should end up inside that folder. So much easier than dealing with the Bookmarks window. — *Rob Griffiths*

Select text like an expert

To select text on a word-by-word basis, double-click and hold, and then start dragging (this works in nearly any program that involves text). As you move the mouse, you'll see entire words being added to your selection as soon as the cursor touches the first character in that word. If you've really got a lot of text to cover, try triple-clicking, holding, and dragging — this highlights entire paragraphs of text as you move the mouse.

Another way to highlight huge blocks of text is to click the mouse once where you want the selection to begin, hold down the shift key, and then click at the end of your selection. To capture a single word or paragraph in a document, double-click to highlight a word or triple-click to grab a whole paragraph. — *Rob Griffiths*

Review trashed files

Even if you've trashed a file, there are times when you want to glance at it before emptying the Trash — just to confirm that yes, this is in fact the file you meant to throw away. Generally this involves dragging that file out of the Trash before you can view it, because the Mac OS doesn't let you double-click on a deleted document to open it.

Mac OS X 10.5 offers a simpler solution: Quick Look. Whenever you want to peek at a dumped file, open up the Trash, select the file, and then press the spacebar to check out its contents (assuming that the document is from a program that supports Quick Look previews). If the document doesn't have a Quick Look preview, you'll have to resort to dragging it out of the Trash. — *Rob Griffiths*

Navigate System Preferences

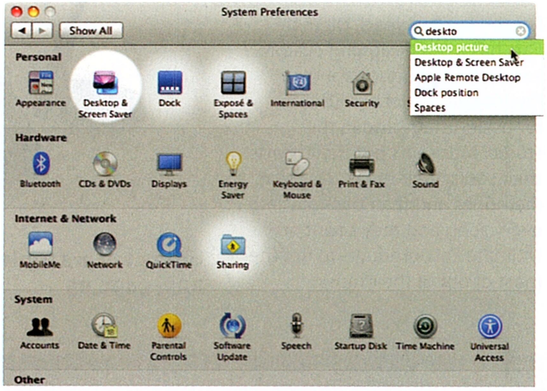
Mac OS X's System Preferences is the heart of the operating system. That's where you'll find controls for everything from how your desktop appears to which users can log in to your machine. It's a program most of us use all the time, so it helps to know a few time-saving tricks to move quickly through it.

The groupings of the System Preferences panes can seem illogical. For instance, why is QuickTime in the Internet & Network section, and Spotlight in Personal? You can eliminate the categories completely by going to View: Organize Alphabetically. This lumps all of your preference panes together in alphabetical order. (To bring back the categories, select View: Organize By Categories.)

You can open a specific preference pane through the Dock. With System Preferences running, click and hold on its Dock icon, then select the pane you want.

My preferred method of opening preference panes quickly is via the keyboard. Launch System Preferences and then start typing the pane's name (for instance, dis for Displays or sta for Startup Disk). Once the one you want is highlighted, press the spacebar to open it. If you accidentally open the wrong one, you can quickly return to the main view by pressing ⌘-L, the shortcut for View: Show All Preferences.

If you can't remember which pane contains the setting you want to tweak, press ⌘-F and then enter what you'd like to find — for instance, users or desktop. The system will display matching commands as you type and highlight the panes where you can find those settings (see the screenshot "Finding panes"). Once you input a few letters, use the mouse or arrow key to select the entry you want from the drop-down menu. — *Rob Griffiths*



Finding panes. Use the Spotlight search box to display panes related to the topic you're trying to find.r

Fix contrast problems

STM Query of the month

My daughter's three-week-old MacBook display has suddenly flickered and gone into what appears to be bright garish colours. The resolution of text is "sharp" and when I go into display settings it is set to 1280x800, millions of colours etc — but the screen colours look more like an old 64-colour screen: very bright. I've run Disk Utility and Repair Permissions to no avail. Help! There's nothing worse than a stressed out 17 year old!
Greg Ramsey
via AMW forums

I sympathise re: stressed out 17 year olds — my daughter's just finished her HSC trials and major works! Check in System Preferences under Universal Access. The first tab is "Seeing", and at the bottom is an "Enhance contrast" slider — is that set anywhere other than the far left of that slider? If so, I think that might be the cause of the problem. — Sean McNamara

Each month STM (02 8338 0222) gives a medium Rogue backpack to the Australian Macworld reader who send in or posts to the forum the most intriguing query.

STM's medium rogue backpack creates mischief for would-be thieves by concealing the laptop compartment from view and hiding it in an internal wall of the bag – so nobody knows you're carrying a laptop except you.

Medium rogue features STM's unique protection system, cushioning the laptop with high-density padding and a foam suspension cradle. Its clean design makes the backpack ideal for streetwear as well as the boardroom.

Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au or post in the forums at www.macworld.com.au/forums. All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.

Customise iPhone ringtones

How would I go about getting my iPhone ringtones to be custom such as movie/TV show themes?
The Cable Guy
via AMW forums

1. Set the start and stop times in the Options section of the Info screen for a track in iTunes (make the length 30 seconds.
2. Make sure AAC is set as the import format for songs in the iTunes preferences (click on Import settings... in the General section of the iTunes prefs in iTunes 8);
3. Choose Create AAC Version from the Advanced menu.
4. Click on the original track and turn off the Start and Stop times in the Info screen;
5. Click on the newly created 30-second version and choose Show in Finder from the File menu;
6. Rename the .m4a file highlighted to have a .m4r extension.
7. Drag the .m4r file to the desktop;
8. Delete the listing in iTunes for the 30-second track, choosing to Keep File in the dialog box;
9. Double-click on the 30-second track on the desktop
10. Delete the file on the desktop.
You don't have to download any extra software, it's free, and it works (on Macs and PCs). — Sean McNamara

Hook your Mac up to a HD TV

Your Mac won't have a HDMI output but the Mac mini and MacBook Pro have a DVI output, so you just need to purchase a DVI to HDMI cable. The MacBook and iMac have a mini-DVI output so you'll need a mini-DVI to DVI adapter on top of that (Also note that because DVI doesn't carry audio you'll need a separate connection for sound.).

A lot of plasma and LCD TVs have a VGA input and all still have the standard RCA inputs. If you're not after the optimal quality, a DVI to VGA or S-Video cable is cheaper and will basically work.

Connect the cables and open the Display tab in your system preferences. Turn on the TV and select the correct AV source — in my case the TV auto-detects when the HDMI input is being used. My MacBook Pro under Leopard auto-detects the TV as well. If your Mac doesn't, click on the Detect Displays button.

You should now see your Mac's desktop mirrored on your TV. It's worth spending some time experimenting with different resolutions for best results. — *David Holloway*

Microsoft Reader tip

More Google tab tricks

You've googled something and have the search results page. You click on a link, but really wanted to ⌘-click so you could retain the search results in another tab. I always keep the results list and ⌘-click links.

Hold down the ⌘ key and click the back browser button. The previous page will open in a new tab. Click the ⌘ key and the forward browser button to open the page you just came "back" from in a new tab.

Davo
via AMW forums

Each month, Microsoft gives a Bluetooth Notebook Mouse 5000 valued at $70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits (via e-mail or the web site) the best and most useful undocumented tip. Enjoy wireless freedom with the Bluetooth Notebook Mouse 5000 – no transceiver to connect or lose! Keep USB ports free for other devices, and take it with you in a convenient carrying case. Microsoft's high-definition laser technology means the mouse is more responsive, more precise and tracks more smoothly than standard laser mouses. It also features a battery indicator light and an on/off switch to conserve power when it's not in use. The ergonomically-designed Bluetooth Notebook Mouse 5000 features four fully- configurable buttons and a scroll wheel. E-mail your tip with the subject header "Help reader tip", including your full name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au or use the "Submit a tip" button on the Help section of www.macworld.com.au. All reader tips become the sole property of Niche Media.

Customise the Media Browser

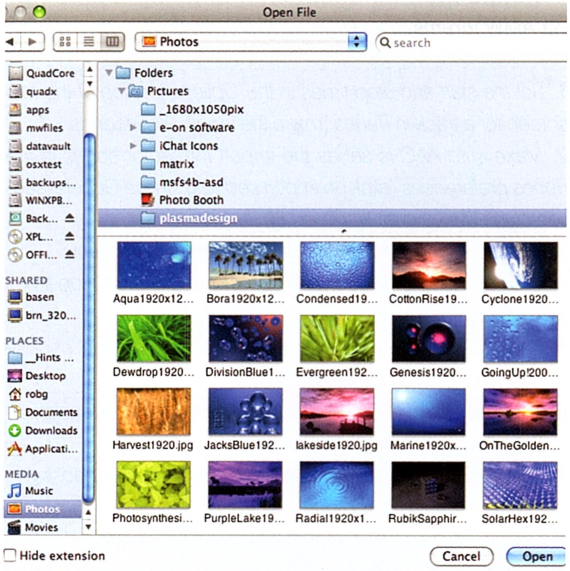
One of the features of Apple's Pages, Numbers, and Keynote — members of the iWork suite — is an integrated Media Browser that appears when you click on the Media button in the toolbar (or choose View: Show Media Browser). The browser also appears in certain media-aware OS X 10.5 programs, such as Safari or TextEdit (select File: Open, and look for it in the Media section of the sidebar).

What the Media Browser displays depends on which program you're using and its media capabilities. However, you're not stuck with the default locations that the Media Browser lists — you can add your own folders.

For the most part, appending folders to the Media Browser is as easy as dragging and dropping. In Safari or TextEdit, select File: Open and then click on one of the supported media types in the sidebar to display the Media Browser. Switch to the Finder, navigate to the folder containing the folder you'd like to add, and then drag and drop the target folder onto the top part of the Media Browser window.

The process is basically the same for iWork programs, except for one glitch: the Media Browser is a floating palette, and it vanishes when you switch to the Finder. But there is a workaround. Say you're using Keynote. Select the Media Browser tab that you want to modify and then switch to the Finder. Locate the folder you'd like to add, start dragging it, and press ⌘-tab to switch to Keynote. Once Keynote becomes active, your floating palettes will appear, and you can drop the folder onto the Media Browser. (You can use Exposé instead of ⌘-tab, if you prefer.)

To locate your new addition, scroll to the bottom of the Media Browser file list and look for an entry called Folders. Click on the triangle to the left to reveal the folder you just added (see the screenshot "Personalise the Media Browser"). To delete that folder, control-click on it in the Media Browser and select Remove Folder from the contextual menu. To get rid of everything you've added, control-click on the Folders folder and select Remove Folders. — *Rob Griffiths*



Personalise the Media Browser. Add your own folders, such as the Pictures folder, to the Media Browser.

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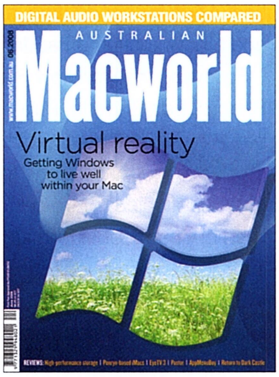
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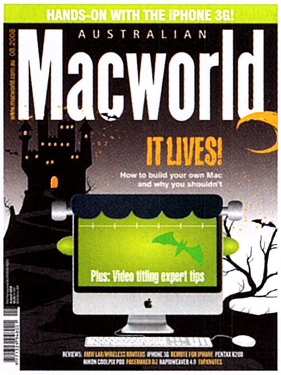
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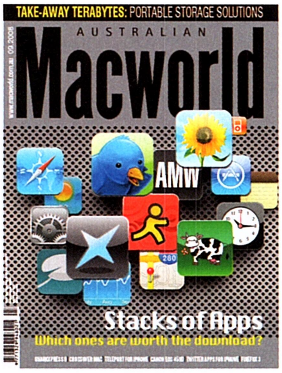
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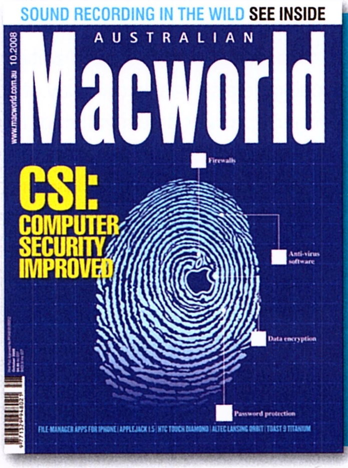

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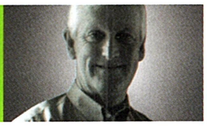

Keith White
has been a Mac
addict since 1984
and can't fathom
why anyone isn't.

Macs, Hacks and Tracks

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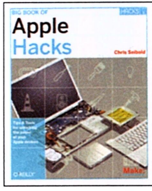

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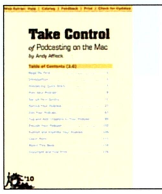

Author **Andy Affleck**
Publisher **TidBITS Publishing**
ISBN **9781933671062**
RRP **$US10.00**

My New Mac is a task-based introduction to the Mac, structured so you can start any one of the 52 projects straight away and quickly feel you've achieved something. A basic introduction includes menus, dialogue boxes, mouse movements, window and file manipulation and use of the Dock. Then move up to shortcuts, Dashboard and Spotlight, file organisation and parental controls to keep the young folk safe. Now get down to work with Stickies, iCal, playing and burning CDs and DVDs, working with digital images in iPhoto, sharing files with Bluetooth and backing up with Time Machine. A section on the internet gives you a thorough workout in Safari, Apple's web browser. Bookmark favorite sites, protect your private details, watch video in a variety of formats and sit in on free university lectures with iTunes U. You'll also learn how to use Mail to send and receive e-mail and deal with junk.

The last section, Maintaining your Macintosh, deals with software updates, preventative maintenance, ejecting stuck disks, password protection, data encryption and solving printer problems.

The projects are all short, well-illustrated and begin with a clear goal and a list of which parts of the Mac system you'll be using. Highly recommended for newbies and switchers.

The Big Book of Apple Hacks aims towards the other end of the market: folk who are comfortable with the basic operations of their Mac and are now ready to lift the bonnet and poke around for something further. With over 600 pages containing 131 hacks loosely gathered into fifteen sections, *Big* it certainly is. Author Chris Seibold gives you the freedom to begin wherever you want if you're up to it, but recommends doing the basic hacks in Chapter 1 first if you're not so sure.

Similarly if you haven't used the command-line interface via Terminal for a while he advises Chapter 4 as a good place to go before attempting more complex hacks. Otherwise each hack is self-contained. And not all involve coding — many are simply clever workarounds or handy tips. Slider bar icons at the start of each hack rate its complexity on a three-point scale.

Check out the web site (see "Hotlinks") for a complete listing of the hacks to see if there's enough there to make it worth your while.

I was particularly interested in booting from an iPod, doing some very clever things in Photo Booth and playing classic arcade games. The geeks will love building a custom Visualizer for iTunes with Quartz Composer, repairing scratched CDs and DVDs and installing a second hard drive into an iBook.

Very much a workshop manual in style there's plenty of code for you to use and ample illustrations to guide your way.

Take Control of Podcasting is now in its second edition, in which author Andy Affleck has new sections covering recording and editing with WireTap Studio and Übercaster, two relatively new and powerful kids on the block. Freeware favourite Audacity gets dropped and the GarageBand focus shifts up from version 3 to 4 or '08 as it's more commonly known. Also added are a list of useful tips for conducting interviews and a new section on audio plug-ins.

Following the workflow Plan, Record, Edit/Encode, Publish you'll begin by selecting a topic and a production format. Things to consider: number of voices, intro/outro, music, fixed or changeable format? F2F interviews or via phone?

So, set up your Mac for sound input, take note of some good advice on mic technique and then hit the red button as Affleck takes you through the recording process.

He follows a similar process in the editing stage, which generally covers removing unwanted sections and adding FX.

He then shows how each software package also has its own way of adding chapters and descriptors or tags to your podcast and of encoding the final product. Included tables compare audio formats and list recommended MP3 and AAC settings. After some good advice on publishing and promoting your finished work you're done.

An hour or two with this ebook will have you ready to start your first podcast or to improve on your first attempts.

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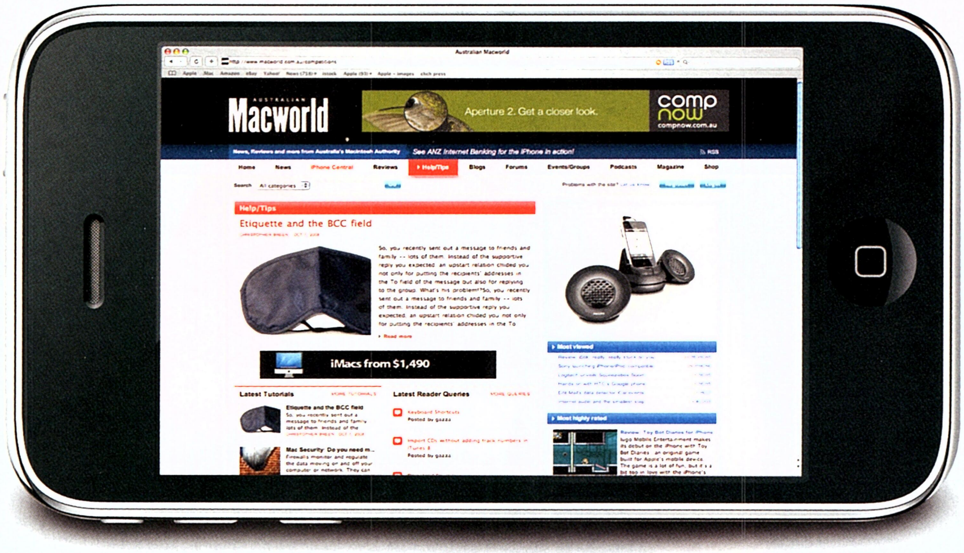


iPhone ready!

	Seagate FreeAgent Go
Type	Portable storage
Rating	🐭🐭🐭🐭
Pros	Fast, FireWire bus-powered.
Cons	A bit bulky, no eSATA.
RRP	Australian pricing not confirmed at press time
Manufacturer	Seagate
Distributor	Seagate 1800 147 201
Reviewer	Chris Holt
Hot links	www.seagate.com

View your options, make your choices. *Australian Macworld* puts latest-release hardware and software through its paces.

Seagate FreeAgent Go for Mac

Speedy storage you can take with you

The FreeAgent Go for Mac is an external hard drive built by storage giant Seagate that promises fast FireWire 800 transfer speeds, spacious storage, and a stylish (if bulky) white and aluminium design meant to complement the Mac.

The FreeAgent Go comes formatted for the Mac, is Time Machine-ready right out of the box, and is available at 250GB and 320GB capacities. We tested the 250GB FreeAgent Go Drive equipped with FireWire 800 and USB 2.0; while it lacks a FireWire 400 port, the FreeAgent Go does include an adapter cable for connecting the drive's FireWire 800 port to a FireWire 400 connector on your Mac.

Once you get through the unwieldy packaging, it's easy to pop the drive into its little dock station for use. The dock plugs into the computer via a FireWire 800 cable and functions much like an iPod or digital camera dock would. Alternatively, you can bypass the dock and plug in the drive directly to your computer using the USB 2.0, FireWire 800, or FireWire 800 to 400 cables.

We tested the drive using FireWire 800, USB 2.0, and FireWire 400 on a MacPro. In our Copy 1GB test, the drive took 41 seconds on average with the FireWire 800 connection, 51 seconds for the FireWire 400 and 45 seconds with the USB 2.0. Compared with other drives we've tested, the times are only slightly slower than desktop drives but marginally faster than competing portable drives.

The duplicate test results were even more impressive. It only took 50 seconds to duplicate a 1GB file with the FireWire 800; 1 minute, 16 seconds with the FireWire 400; and 1 minute, 31 seconds with the USB 2.0 connection. These times, along with the low memory Photoshop test results (FireWire 800, 1 minute, 38 seconds; FireWire 400, 1 minute and 45 seconds; and USB 2.0, 1 minute, 48 seconds) are not only faster than most portable drives we've seen, but comparable to many larger desktop drives.

How we tested. We ran all tests with drives connected to a Mac Pro Quad 2.66GHz Xeon with Mac OS X 10.5 installed and 1GB of RAM. We tested the drive with each available port – FireWire 800, USB 2, and FireWire 400 to 800 adapter. We copied a folder containing 1GB of data from our Mac's hard drive to the external hard drive to test the drive's write speed. We then duplicated that file on the external drive to test both read and write speeds. We also used the drive as a scratch disk when running our low-memory Adobe Photoshop CS3 Suite test. This test is a set of four tasks performed on a 150MB file, with Photoshop's memory set to 25 percent.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The FreeAgent Go's compact size (it's small enough to take with you but a little too bulky for a pocket) and wedge-shaped design make it easy to write off as a stylish but substance-free toy. But it offers satisfying speed and plenty of transfer options with its multiple ports and adapters. I personally didn't find the dock necessary, but some users will be thankful it helps reduce the amount of clutter on your desk. It's also really easy to throw photos, music, or other files onto this little drive and then pack it up to go. Maybe style and substance can have a happy marriage after all.

RATINGS KEY

Outstanding	🐭🐭🐭🐭🐭
Very good	🐭🐭🐭🐭
Good	🐭🐭🐭
Flawed	🐭🐭
Unacceptable	🐭
Dangerous	💣

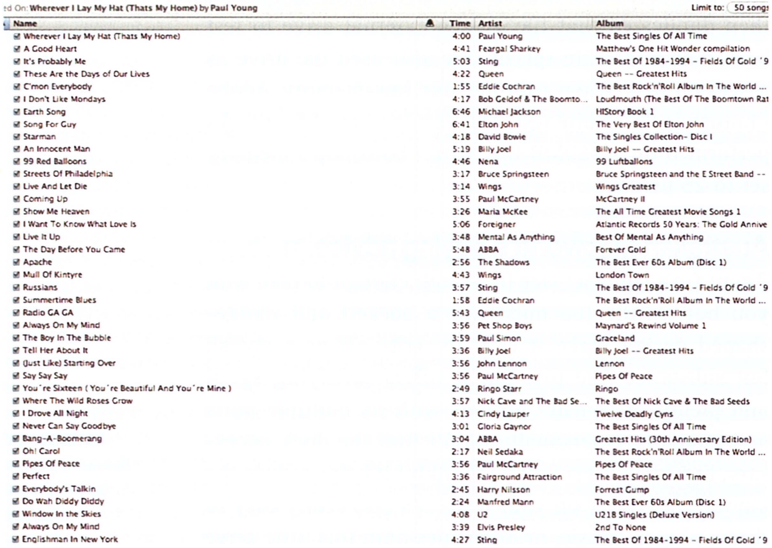
	iTunes 8
Type	Media player plus more
Rating	♪♪♪♪1/2
Pros	Genius Playlists are surprisingly good, and should just get better; totally trippy new visualisers sure to be a hit in dorm rooms
Cons	Genius Sidebar tends to recommend music you already own; lack of preference to disable iTunes Store links in library
OS X	10.4, 10.5
Processor	Universal
RRP	Free download
Publisher	Apple, Inc.
Distributor	Apple
Reviewer	Scott McNulty
Hot links	www.itunes.com

iTunes 8

Adds some new tricks

The last few major updates to iTunes have added everything from new looks to the ability to watch movies and TV shows, download podcasts, and get recommendations for iTunes Store purchases. It would seem that all that could be done to Apple's media manager and player had already been done. But it turns out that Apple still has some tricks up its sleeve with iTunes 8. The latest version returns the sense of fun to listening to music on your Mac (or PC).

iTunes 8 isn't a revolution in media players, but its new features, a new Grid layout, Genius Playlists, the Genius sidebar, and a very nice new visualiser, make an already capable application even more indispensable.



:d On: **Wherever I Lay My Hat (Thats My Home) by Paul Young** Limit to: 50 song:

Name	Time	Artist	Album
☑ Wherever I Lay My Hat (Thats My Home)	4:00	Paul Young	The Best Singles Of All Time
☑ A Good Heart	4:41	Feargal Sharkey	Matthew's One Hit Wonder compilation
☑ It's Probably Me	5:03	Sting	The Best Of 1984-1994 - Fields Of Gold '9
☑ These Are the Days of Our Lives	4:22	Queen	Queen -- Greatest Hits
☑ C'mon Everybody	1:55	Eddie Cochran	The Best Rock'n'Roll Album In The World ...
☑ I Don't Like Mondays	4:17	Bob Geldof & The Boomto...	Loudmouth (The Best Of The Boomtown Rat
☑ Earth Song	6:46	Michael Jackson	HIStory Book 1
☑ Song For Guy	6:41	Elton John	The Very Best Of Elton John
☑ Starman	4:18	David Bowie	The Singles Collection- Disc I
☑ An Innocent Man	5:19	Billy Joel	Billy Joel -- Greatest Hits
☑ 99 Red Balloons	4:46	Nena	99 Luftballons
☑ Streets Of Philadelphia	3:17	Bruce Springsteen	Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band --
☑ Live And Let Die	3:14	Wings	Wings Greatest
☑ Coming Up	3:55	Paul McCartney	McCartney II
☑ Show Me Heaven	3:26	Maria McKee	The All Time Greatest Movie Songs 1
☑ I Want To Know What Love Is	5:06	Foreigner	Atlantic Records 50 Years: The Gold Annive
☑ Live It Up	3:48	Mental As Anything	Best Of Mental As Anything
☑ The Day Before You Came	5:48	ABBA	Forever Gold
☑ Apache	2:56	The Shadows	The Best Ever 60s Album (Disc 1)
☑ Mull Of Kintyre	4:43	Wings	London Town
☑ Russians	3:57	Sting	The Best Of 1984-1994 - Fields Of Gold '9
☑ Summertime Blues	1:58	Eddie Cochran	The Best Rock'n'Roll Album In The World ...
☑ Radio GA GA	5:43	Queen	Queen -- Greatest Hits
☑ Always On My Mind	3:56	Pet Shop Boys	Maynard's Rewind Volume 1
☑ The Boy In The Bubble	3:59	Paul Simon	Graceland
☑ Tell Her About It	3:36	Billy Joel	Billy Joel -- Greatest Hits
☑ (Just Like) Starting Over	3:56	John Lennon	Lennon
☑ Say Say Say	3:56	Paul McCartney	Pipes Of Peace
☑ You're Sixteen (You're Beautiful And You're Mine)	2:49	Ringo Starr	Ringo
☑ Where The Wild Roses Grow	3:57	Nick Cave and The Bad Se...	The Best Of Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds
☑ I Drove All Night	4:13	Cindy Lauper	Twelve Deadly Cyns
☑ Never Can Say Goodbye	3:01	Gloria Gaynor	The Best Singles Of All Time
☑ Bang-A-Boomerang	3:04	ABBA	Greatest Hits (30th Anniversary Edition)
☑ Oh! Carol	2:17	Neil Sedaka	The Best Rock'n'Roll Album In The World ...
☑ Pipes Of Peace	3:56	Paul McCartney	Pipes Of Peace
☑ Perfect	3:36	Fairground Attraction	The Best Singles Of All Time
☑ Everybody's Talkin	2:45	Harry Nilsson	Forrest Gump
☑ Do Wah Diddy Diddy	2:24	Manfred Mann	The Best Ever 60s Album (Disc 1)
☑ Window In the Skies	4:08	U2	U218 Singles (Deluxe Version)
☑ Always On My Mind	3:39	Elvis Presley	2nd To None
☑ Englishman In New York	4:27	Sting	The Best Of 1984-1994 - Fields Of Gold '9

A sample Genius playlist. The new Genius feature does a great job of helping you rediscover music in your library.

Grid view. The first thing you'll notice after installing and launching iTunes 8 is a progress bar churning through your iTunes library. This one-time process creates album art for the new default view of iTunes: Grid view. Very similar to Events in iPhoto '08, the Grid view displays your iTunes library as a grid composed of album art. (This view is available for music, podcasts, and videos.)

Think of it as a flattened Cover Flow, the same eye candy with about the same amount of practical use (that is, very little). You start playing an album or video by clicking on the album art. Double clicking on an album takes you to a more traditional list view with the addition of artwork in the first column. To change what view iTunes defaults to when you launch the program, simply change to your desired view before you quit iTunes.

If you're the type who makes sure that all your albums have cover art, and all the genres are applied correctly in the metadata of your media, then Grid view is going to be your new best friend. If you're like me, Grid view is going to serve as a reminder that yet another aspect of your life is out of control. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Grid view sorted by genres. Apple has provided a number of tastefully-designed stock art images for genres found in the iTunes Store. When in this view, you can scrub through the albums in each group by dragging your mouse across the artwork, much like Events in iPhoto and footage in iMovie. The problem arises when you have music that wasn't purchased from iTunes. A surprising number of genre name variants crop up, leaving you to either edit the metadata for a cleaner, more organised experience or live with a sloppy iTunes library.

Genius. The Grid view is flashy, but the real game changer in iTunes 8 is Genius. Genius comes in two guises, Genius Playlist and Genius Sidebar, and is similar to music recommendation offerings by Last.fm and Pandora. If you choose to use Genius, which is optional, a few things happen. First, it analyses your iTunes library and transmits that data, anonymously, to the Apple's servers. That data is compared to data from countless other iTunes 8 users, and fed into Apple's Genius algorithms. The algorithm then reports the results back to iTunes, which uses it to create Genius playlists of 25, 50, or 100 songs, based on whatever track you select. You can listen to that playlist, save it for later, or hit Refresh and have Genius create another playlist that is more to your liking. Much like Party Shuffle, you can delete songs that you don't want to be included in the playlist, and re-order the songs.

After creating countless Genius Playlists, I am a convert. This is a great way to rediscover music that has been hidden away in the depths of your iTunes library, and it groups songs that I would never think of grouping myself ("Veronica" by Elvis Costello goes well with "Debaser" by The Pixies – who would have thought?).

When Genius can't create a playlist it pops up a warning, and suggests that you update the Genius data on your Mac. Classical music, in particular, seems to stump Genius. And since this initial version of Genius appears to derive a lot of its data off iTunes Store purchases, songs by artists not in Apple's online store – like, say, the Beatles – can also flummox it. Click on a tune by the Fab Four, and Genius will be unable to generate a playlist. Presumably, as the feature gets more data from more users, issues like these should, theoretically, become moot.

The Abbott to Genius Playlist's Costello is the Genius Sidebar, which marries the iTunes Store's Just for You recommendations to the mini-store interface that was introduced in iTunes 6. The Genius Sidebar takes the currently playing song and, using that fabled Genius algorithm, returns recommendations from the iTunes Store. The recommendations include songs and albums you might be interested in, as well as songs that iTunes believes are missing from your library (for example, perhaps you only purchased one or two songs off of an album). I've found myself losing a number of hours checking out songs that the Genius Sidebar suggested. You can preview songs right in the sidebar, while you have to go into the iTunes Store to check out albums.

The Genius Sidebar does have some limitations. It has a propensity to recommend songs and albums I already own. It has trouble basing recommendations on more obscure titles (though when recommendations can't be found, the sidebar displays a list of top sellers in iTunes, so you can still spend some money if you are so inclined). Genius does take some time to analyse your library when you launch iTunes 8. It took 28 minutes to analyse my library which contains 35.50 GB of data (7,774 items), though you can still use iTunes to listen to music or watch videos as Genius is analysing your library and then talking to the cloud.

Australian Macworld's buying advice.

iTunes 8 is worth upgrading to for Genius alone. The refined podcast settings and new visualisers are also welcome additions. Grid view looks pretty, with a properly prepared library, but isn't the most practical way of browsing your library especially in an age when the single is outselling the album.

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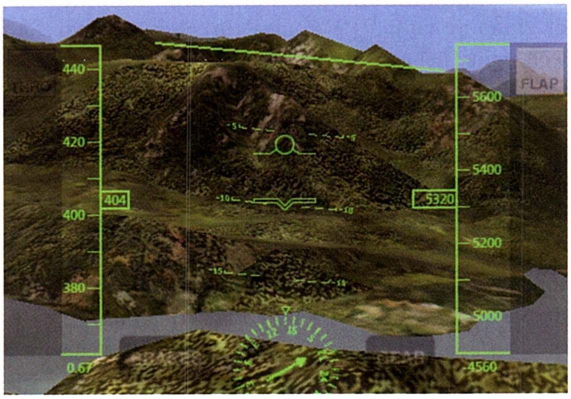
	X-Plane 9 for iPhone
Type	Flight simulator
Rating	🐭🐭🐭1/2
Pros	Great graphics, intuitive controls.
Cons	Some bugs and annoying behaviour
OS X	iPhone 2.1
RRP	$12.99
Publisher	Laminar Research
Distributor	App Store
Reviewer	Rob Griffiths
Hot links	tinyurl.com/XPlane9



X-Plane 9 for iPhone

Take to the skies

X-Plane for iPhone is based on X-Plane, which is the most advanced flight simulator available for the Mac. It has an advanced flight model, realistic and dynamic weather, the ability to fly hundreds of planes, and a worldwide database of airports and navigation aids. Each airplane has a fully functional panel, containing all the key instruments you'd find in the real version, and the mix of airplane types available is huge – everything from gliders up to a 747.

X-Plane for the Mac requires something like 60GB of disk space for a full install – the iPhone install, on the other hand, weighs in at just 7MB. So what do you give up? First of all, the world is much smaller – the entire planet is a roughly 4100 square kilometre area around Innsbruck, Austria. Within the world, there's but one airport, and no cities. There are also fewer aircraft, a reduced-accuracy flight model, and no navigation aids.

Flying in X-Plane is very intuitive – there are sliders on each side of the screen to control the throttle and flaps, two buttons in the centre for gear and brakes, and a row of buttons across the top to control the view and set up the simulator. All of these interface elements are typically in a near-transparent state; when you touch the screen, though, they turn opaque, making them easy to use without being visually distracting.

You can fly one of four aircraft (a Cessna 172, Columbia – now Cessna – 400, Cirrus Vision jet, and Piaggio Avanti), and all four share the same greatly-simplified instrument panel – it's not really a panel at all, but a heads-up display on top of the moving scenery. On the heads-up display, you'll see everything you need to fly – airspeed and altitude indicators, an artificial horizon with flight path indicator, a compass (with a needle that points to the one airport), and throttle and flap position indicators.

There are some concessions to lessen the load on the iPhone's CPU – you can, for instance, enter a 90-degree banked turn from a maximum-speed dive without any damage to your aircraft. Try that same trick in X-Plane for the Mac (or in a real plane!), and you'd basically fold your wings in half, ending your flight very quickly and painfully. These concessions pay off in usability, however – the game has a good frame rate, and I was able to play for over an hour straight with only a slight change in the battery indicator when I was done.

A few bugs. Despite being based on version 9 of the desktop product, it's important to note that this is a version 1.0 release. As such, I ran into quite a few things that either didn't work quite right, or could be improved with a software update.

The most annoying bug is that you can't really sleep your iPhone when X-Plane is running – press the Sleep button while in X-Plane and the iPhone's screen goes black, but the game's audio will keep playing. Left in this mode, the iPhone's battery will drain quite quickly, obviously.

The game also won't remember its state if you get a phone call while playing; when you hang up the phone, X-Plane will start again, but you'll be back on the runway. There's also no way to say "save my current position" if you want to stop using X-Plane for a bit and then resume where you left off.

X-Plane won't remember your settings for preferred aircraft, sky condition, or winds between launches – each time you start the game, these things reset to their default values. Finally, the program crashed a few times during my tests, usually when I moved the camera about in an external view.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Unlike X-Plane for the Mac, X-Plane for the iPhone isn't intended to be a pure flight simulator with incredible realism in all realms; its main focus is on having fun while providing a somewhat realistic and visually interesting flying experience. By that definition, X-Plane for iPhone is a tremendous success.

	Mio Moov 370
Type	GPS Recevier
Rating	●●● 1/2
Pros	Screen, TMC
Cons	Slow route recalculation, default settings annoying
RRP	$560
Manufacturer	Mio
Distributor	Mio 1300 646 477
Reviewer	Anthony Caruana
Hot links	www.mio.com/au

Mio Moov 370

Gets you where you're going

Mio was probably the first company to introduce an affordable GPS receiver to the Australian market. Its latest effort, the Moov 370, delivers all the latest features including turn-by-turn navigation, a bright, clear display and access to the Traffic Management Channel.

The Moov 370 is very easy to set up and use. The car mount is robust and easily adjusted. The screen is very bright and automatically toggles between day and night modes. The 4.3-inch touch screen is well utilised with clear maps, the next turn and remaining distance in the journey information all clearly displayed.

Satellite acquisition took about 90 seconds from a cold start. Route calculation, fuelled by the Moov 370's Samsung 2443 processor clocked at 400MHz, was reasonably quick. However, route recalculations took longer than I'd like. For example, by the time some recalculations had completed I'd already missed the next suggested turn.

The Traffic Management Channel is a subscription service – available in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane – that delivers real-time traffic information to the GPS receiver over FM radio. The Moov 370 uses the data to provide information about delays and their duration, allowing you to make decisions about whether to take another road.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Mio's Moov 370 is a competent and well-featured GPS receiver. The display is excellent and, other than some annoying default settings, it's very easy to use. The combination of turn-by-turn instructions and TMC at this price represents good value for money.

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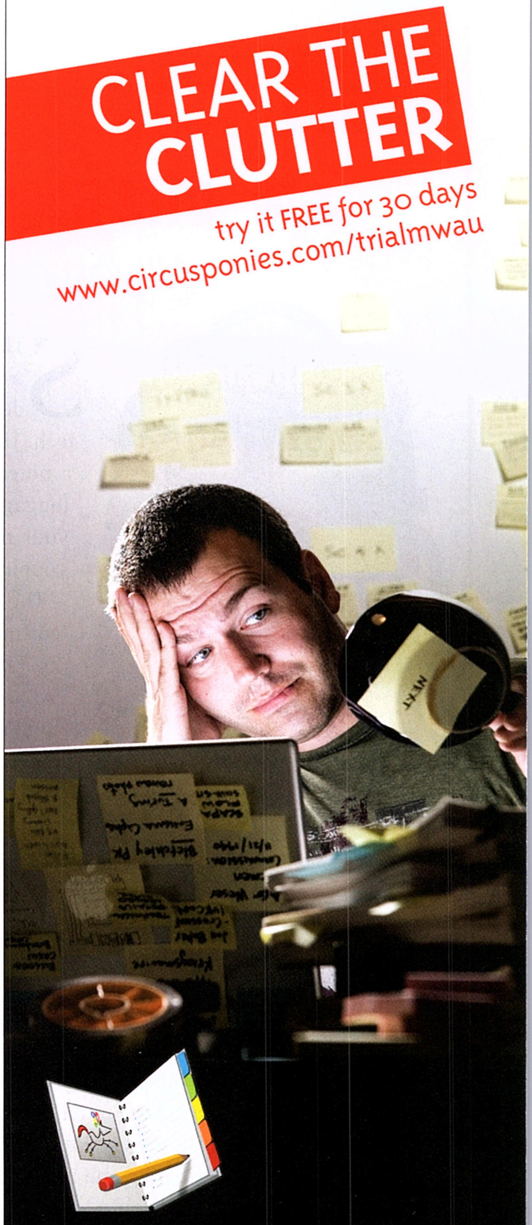

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	STM Rogue Roller 17"	iVolution Top SP
Type	Laptop bag	iPhone 3G case
Rating	🐁🐁🐁🐁	🐁🐁🐁🐁 1/2
Pros	Solid, well made.	Beautifully made.
Cons	Too large for carry-on with some airlines.	None.
RRP	$180	$105
Manufacturer	STM Bags	Vaja
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Reviewer	Anthony Caruana	Anthony Caruana
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STM Rogue Roller 17"

All you need for a trip

STM is an Australian company with a talent for making robust, well designed bags for carrying your tech. The Rogue Roller 17" is more than a notebook bag. It's a piece of mobile luggage that lets you not only pack your notebook but enough gear for a couple of days away.

The Rogue Roller has several compartments, each sized differently making it easy to arrange your gear. At the front, there's a small pocket that's the right size for a notepad. Then there's a larger section for that has sections for pens, a PDA, iPod and documents.

There's a padded compartment for a laptop. It's capable of holding up to a 17-inch MacBook Pro. For smaller notebooks, I'd suggest either using a protective sleeve so that the computer doesn't slide around.

The main section of the Rogue Roller can hold plenty of clothes or papers. It's nicely lined and there are straps that stop your gear from moving around.

The build quality of the bar and wheels was very solid. I gave all the moving parts a powerful tug and shake and there was very little movement. In fact everything from the stitching and zips to the materials gave me confidence that this would be a bag that will last many years.

If it's your only bag, the Rogue Roller 17" just fits as carry-on luggage with Qantas but is too large for Virgin Blue or Jetstar.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The STM Rogue Roller 17" is very well made bag designed for the frequent traveller. Plenty of thought has gone into the design and I think it's worth considering if you're in the market for a travel bag.

iVolution Top SP

Classy case for iPhone

One of the most incredible aspects of the entire iPod/iPhone phenomenon is the ecosystem of accessories that has grown around those incredible devices. However, let's face it – the quality is variable. That's where Vaja comes to the party. Vaja has been making premium cases for all manner of mobile device for the last few years with the finest materials.

The iVolution Top SP is a flip case for the iPhone 3G, made from full-grain Argentinian cowhide. Vaja makes no apologies for the fact that using premium materials leads to a higher priced product. While its cases are mass-produced, they are made one at a time. As a result, there's plenty of attention to detail. Certainly, my iPhone 3G fit snugly into the iVolution Top SP with no chance of accidentally sliding out.

The front flap is solid, offering great protection for the iPhone's screen. The back offers excellent protection as well. The cutaways for the power button, headphone port, camera, volume control and silencer provide easy access. The case itself adds very little bulk to the iPhone's body. Even with the iVolution Top SP adorning my iPhone, it still fit into a pocket easily.

Out of the box, I only had one criticism. The flip was quite stiff and difficult to open in a hurry. It became a little more malleable over time so I suspect that after a couple of weeks of regular use that the catch will free up a little. It's also worth noting that you'll need to extract the iPhone from the iVolution Top SP if you use a dock.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The Vaja iVolution Top SP case for the iPhone 3G costs a pretty penny but if you like the finer things then it's worth a look. It can be purchased locally or online from Vaja's web site. Online purchasers can choose custom colours but, because of the manufacturing process, there's a 30-day wait.

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Palm Treo Pro

Another evolutionary step

It'd be fair to say that Palm's Treo line, while revolutionary when first introduced, has been making only incremental enhancements over the last couple of years. The Palm Treo Pro is a great device that represents the next evolutionary step in the development of the Palm's flagship product.

Although the Treo Pro is a few millimetres thicker than the iPhone 3G it's very comfortable to hold. The 320x320 screen takes up about half the face with the rest consumed by a QWERTY keyboard, a multi-directional controller and buttons for making calls, accessing the calendar and e-mail and quick access to the Start menu.

As a Windows Mobile 6.1 device, you'd expect the Treo Pro to rely on lots of stylus input. However, the combination of buttons, controller and QWERTY keyboard mean that you seldom need to extract the stylus from the bottom right-corner of the unit.

Connectivity to the internet is covered by HSDPA/3G and 802.11b/g WiFi. Both worked well with the WiFI connecting almost instantly to our WPA protected WLAN. The Windows Mobile e-mail client is easy to configure and does a decent job of displaying messages, even those with rich content. Web browsing, on the other hand, was painful. Compared to Safari on the iPhone, Pocket Internet Explorer is primitive.

The Treo Pro has an integrated GPS receiver. While the screen is very clear, the interface isn't very easy to use. That said, I wouldn't expect folks to buy a Treo Pro as a primary GPS unit but it's good enough for helping you get around at a pinch.

Australian Macworld's buying advice.

The Palm Treo Pro is a competent smartphone that ticks all of the communications and functional boxes you'd expect.

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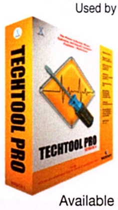

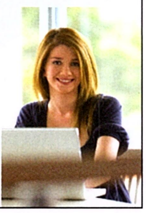

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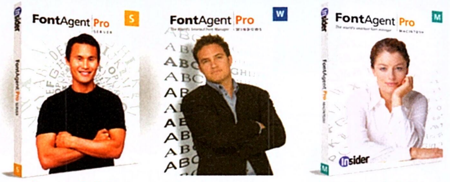

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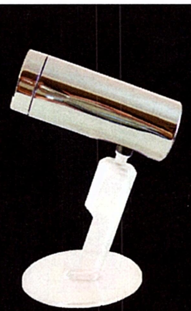

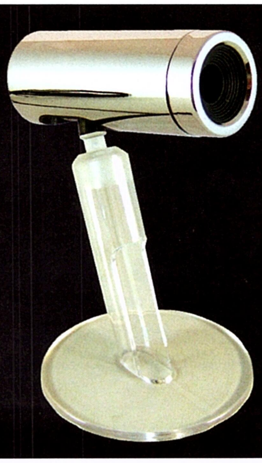

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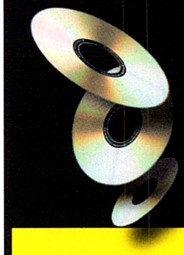

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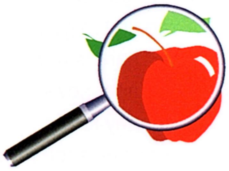

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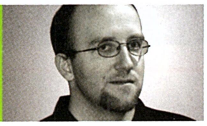
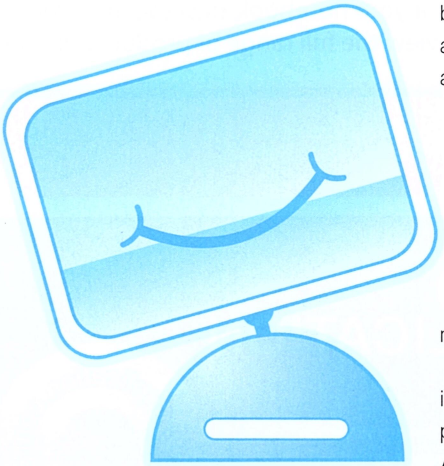


Alex Kidman
is waiting patiently for Oscar the Grouch to pop out of the Trash can.

Are you sure?

Smiling happy people

My electric toothbrush has a not-too-subtle little feature in it. Specifically, if I opt to brush my teeth for more than two minutes, then a little smiley face pops up on the timer LCD in the handle. It's a form of subtle persuasion; brush for long enough and I get a slight bit of encouragement for my efforts, and hopefully, some time down the track, my dental hygienist won't be attacking my gums with such manic fervour. At least, that's my hope, although I all too often suspect that nothing short of a blow to the head with a rack full of toothbrushes will stop her — but I'm getting off the point.



Interfaces that are friendly to us are pretty much automatically more pleasant to use. This is a trick that OS X uses an awful lot, and something that Apple's considered for a very long time. One of the best reasons to recommend an Apple to novice users is the easy interface. There's a big difference between "easy" and "simplistic", by the way. There's precious little that you can't do just as well with a Mac as with a PC, but I know which one has a generally better feel to it. That's also (if you're an existing user of PCs) once you get past the culture shock of the way that OS X does some things differently. Not necessarily better, but just with a different way of achieving the same goal.

Still, the OS X interface isn't just rounded buttons and shiny docks; it's also meant to be understandable interfaces that gently guide you through most common computing tasks and (as long as you stay away from Terminal) even give you guidance through features you may never have used before. It's certainly a world more acceptable than, say "Fatal Exception Error 10 (0Ah): Invalid Task State Segment Fault". Because despite what people much smarter than myself might think, that's just plain scary. Anything fatal is scary automatically. Me, I miss the classic Amiga "Guru Meditation Error" — but again I'm getting off the point.

There is a downside to a friendly interface, however. While they're good (as my toothbrush is) at providing positive encouragement for novices, when they won't tell you what it is that you want to know, they're positively maddening. Suddenly, the smiling face that gives you positive encouragement isn't positive at all — it's just infuriatingly smug.

There's a favourite Terry Pratchett quote of mine (from Good Omens) that covers it nicely. He's talks about how God doesn't play dice, but instead "an ineffable game of his own devising, which might be compared, from the perspective of any of the other players, to being involved in an obscure and complex version of poker in a pitch dark room, with blank cards, for infinite stakes, with a dealer who won't tell you the rules, and who smiles all the time."

Replace "God" with "most computer systems" and you'll find that they tend to stop at the word "rules", but OS X often goes the whole hog. Just because it's smiling, however, doesn't necessarily mean that you're doing well. It might just mean that it likes smiling.

Take, as an example, Safari on the iPhone. Now, all the iPhone users, put your hands up if you use Safari. All of you? Yeah, I figured as much. Now, keep your hands up if Safari's never been in the middle of something (quite often, it can be seemingly anything) and suddenly quit on you, all rather rapidly. Hang on ... I can't see any hands up at all.

I like the iPhone icon interface as much as the next guy, but not when I'm in the middle of something, and especially not because all you can do in that instance is sigh, reload Safari and hope that your 3G data connection still wants to play nicely. If at all.

Or iTunes 8, and the much lauded Genius feature. Now, maybe it's just my taste in music, but of the fifty or so playlists I've created with Genius so far, about half have come back to let me know that there's not enough information to create a playlist. At least on the new iPod nano, it'll grey out the Genius option if it knows this upfront, but iTunes will just hit you with an error message that doesn't really help at all. Why doesn't this so-called Genius know things? Isn't that one of the simple basis points of being a Genius in the first place?

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go and prepare myself for the dentist. Time to find out if my smiling toothbrush has been mocking me all along.

Hotlinks

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_Omens
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longevity.about.com/od/lifelongbeauty/tp/smiling.htm
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Safari goes on a crashing Safari

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by Richard Thalheimer

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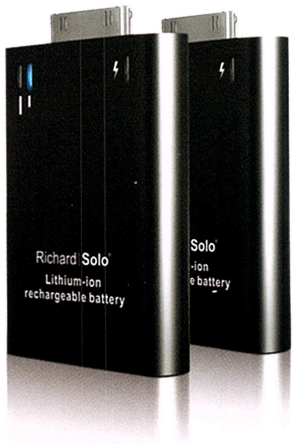

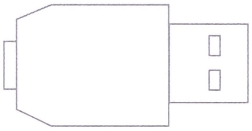

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